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CONAN

THE DESTROYER™

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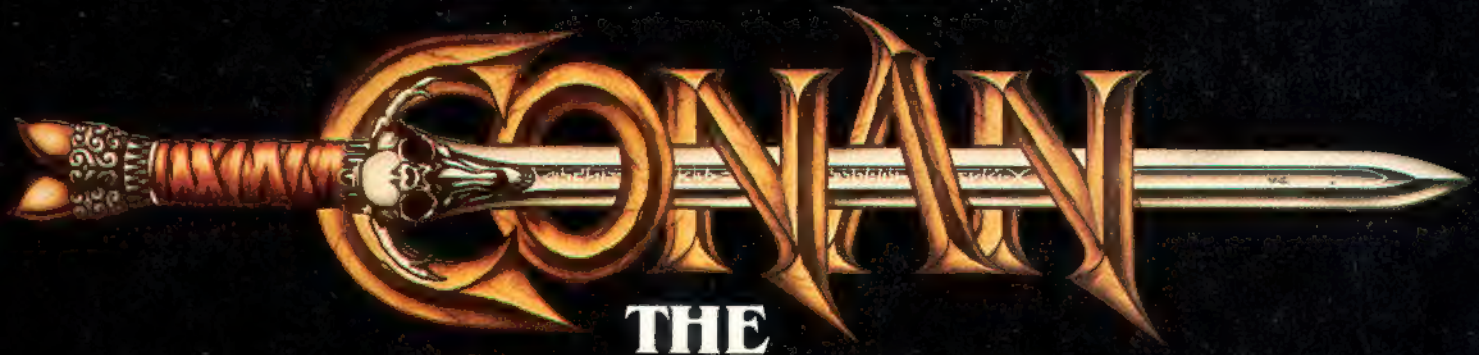
STAN LEE

presents

THE MARVEL COMICS ADAPTATION OF

ROBERT E. HOWARD'S



THE DESTROYER

DINO DE LAURENTIS
presents an
EDWARD R. PRESSMAN
production

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

as
"CONAN THE DESTROYER"

GRACE JONES
WILT CHAMBERLAIN
MAKO
TRACEY WALTER
OLIVIA D'ABO
SARAH DOUGLAS

Screenplay by
STANLEY MANN

Story by
ROY THOMAS & GERRY CONWAY

Music by
BASIL POLEDOURIS

Photographed by
JACK CARDIFF

"DAGOTH" created by
CARLO RAMBALDI

Executive producer
STEPHEN KESTEN

Produced by
RAFFAELLA DE LAURENTIS

Directed by
RICHARD FLEISHER

MARVEL AND THE BARBARIANS

Robert E. Howard never met **Stan Lee**. A pity; I'm sure **REH** would've been pleased. His magnificent creation, *The Hyborian Age*, and the men and women (and *things*) who inhabit it have long occupied their own unique corner of **Stan The Man's** utopian *Marvel Universe*. Along with *Spider-Man*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Captain America*, and (my personal favorite) *Power Man and Iron Fist*, **Marvel Comics** has regularly published the exploits of *Kull The Conqueror*, *Red Sonja*, *Solomon Kane*, and of course, ol' whatsisname. Editor **Larry Hama** (the driving force behind *G.I. Joe*) has long been a **REH** enthusiast, so much so that Editor in Chief **Jim Shooter** (the creative genius behind *Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars*) entrusted **Larry** with the awesome responsibility of shepherding all of Marvel's **REH** titles (save *Kull The Conqueror*, which is being edited by **Ralph** (*What If?*) **Macchio**). **Larry** (with just a little help from Yours Truly) has performed this task admirably. This month alone you can look forward to *The Savage Sword of Conan* #106, featuring "Feud of Blood" by **Michael Fleisher** and **Dave Simons**; *Conan The Barbarian* #165, featuring "Blood of The Titan" by **Michael Fleisher**, **John Buscema**, and **Armando Gil**; *Conan The King* #26, featuring "Passage" by **Alan Zelenetz**, **Marc Silvestri**, and **Geof Isherwood**; *Conan Annual* #9, featuring "Wrath of the Shambling God" by **Michael Fleisher** and **Ernie Chan**, and the return of a certain she-devil with a sword to regular publication with *Red Sonja* #5's "Islands of the Inland Sea" by **Bill Mantlo** and **Pat Broderick**. Not to mention this deluxe edition of Marvel's adaptation of the second blockbuster Conan film, *Conan The Destroyer*.

The Hyborian Age and the *Marvel Age* seem to be running neck and neck; both are ages undreamed of, and both seem to go on without end. **Stan's** miraculous mighty Marvel marches on, with Conan and friends firmly ensconced within the ranks. Sadly, **Robert E. Howard** is not with us today to see his legacy procreate, but of one thing I'm sure. He would be pleased.

Jim Owsley
Managing Editor

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Vol. 1 No. 35 Dec. 1984

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ELIOT R. BROWN man with a wrench

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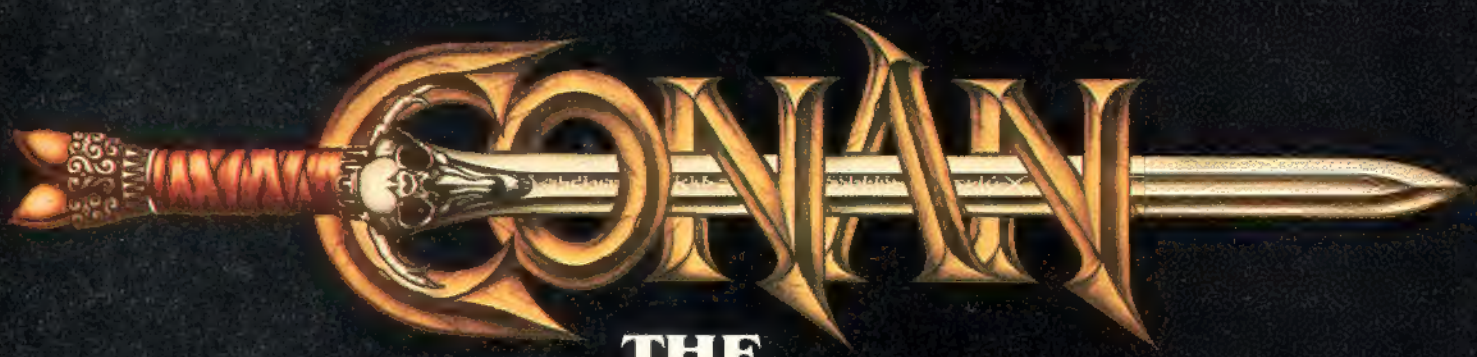

THE DESTROYER

PART I

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JOHN BUSCEMA

Lettered by
RICHARD PARKER

Colored by
GEORGE ROUSSOS

Edited by
LARRY HAMA

Supervised by
JIM SHOOTER

CONAN
I'VE GOT THIS ONE!

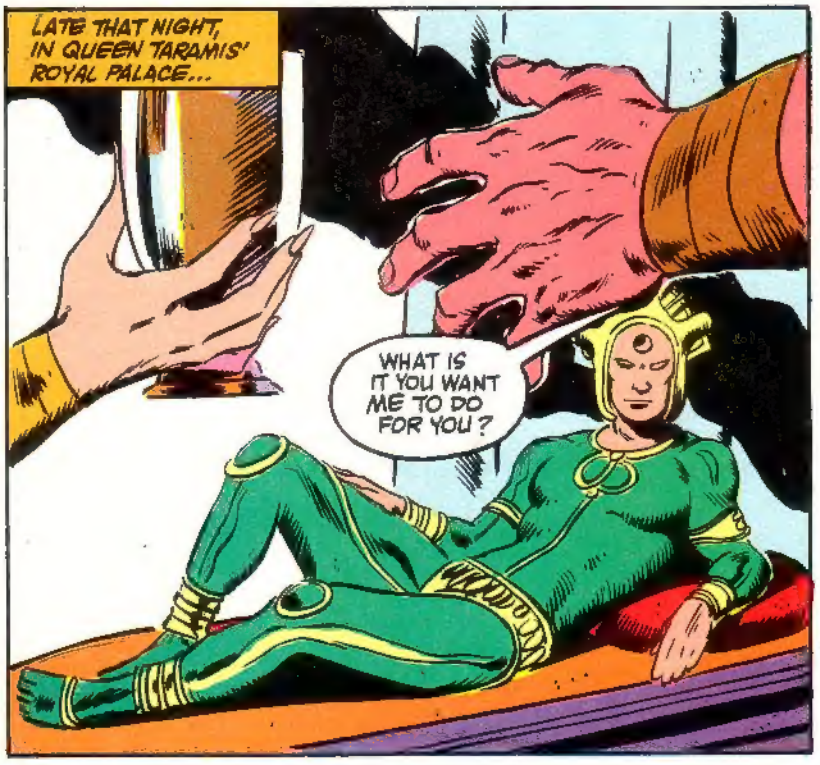
UNNGHH!
WHY ARE THEY SO ANGRY?
WE DIDN'T STEAL EVERY-THING THAT MERCHANT HAD!
WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME!
AT MY COMMAND, BOMBAATA, YOU WILL SOUND THE HORN.
NETS NOW?!
BUT, CIMMERIAN, WHY AREN'T THEY TRYING TO KILL US?

MAYBE THEY WANT TO CAPTURE US, MALAK, AND THEN TORTURE US TO DEATH!
WOOOOOAAAAA
STAY YOUR WEAPONS! STOP THE ATTACK!

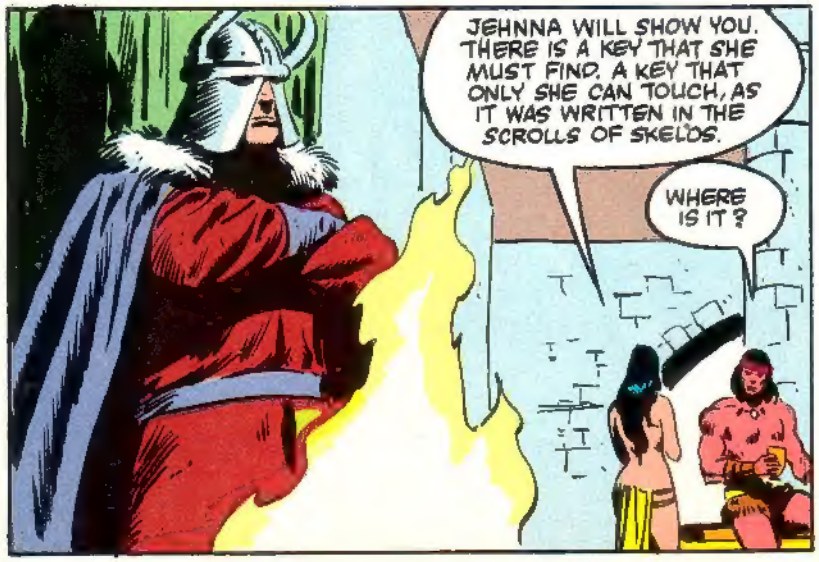
SO, YOU ARE CONAN. CONAN THE BARBARIAN. CONAN THE DESTROYER. CONAN THE--
--THE KING OF THIEVES! AND I--
--I AM TARAMIS, QUEEN OF SHADIZAR.
I NEED YOUR HELP, BARBARIAN. I HAVE NEED OF A MASTER THIEF.
YOU HAVE NOTHING I WANT. WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU?
THERE IS NO MAN ALIVE WHO DOESN'T HARBOR IN HIMSELF A SECRET DESIRE, BARBARIAN. AND WHATEVER IS YOUR DESIRE, I CAN PROVIDE IT.
WHAT IS THERE, CONAN? THINK. SHOW ME THE DESIRE IN YOUR DEEPEST HEART.
I SEE--VALERIA. BUT VALERIA IS DEAD. SHE SITS BY THE SIDE OF MY GOD, CROM.

WHAT I WOULD ASK FOR, YOU CANNOT GIVE ME.
I CAN.

YOU CAN BRING BACK THE DEAD?
DO WHAT I ASK OF YOU, AND I WILL.

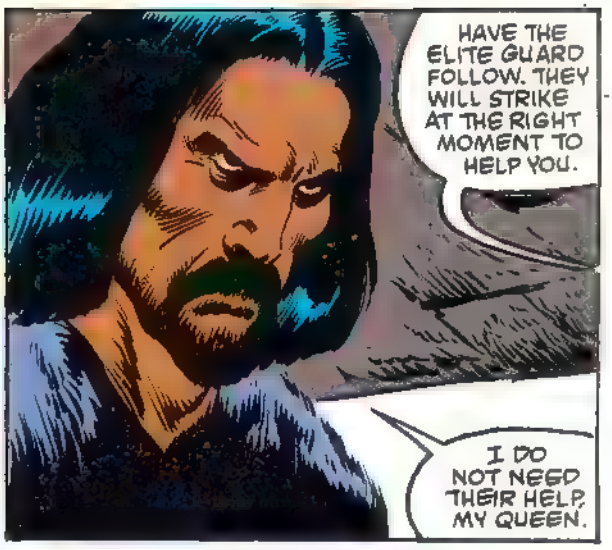

LATE THAT NIGHT, IN QUEEN TARAMIS' ROYAL PALACE...
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?

I HAVE A NIECE. HER NAME IS JEHNNA. HER PARENTS DIED TRAGICALLY WHEN SHE WAS TWO YEARS OLD. I WANT YOU TO TAKE HER ON A JOURNEY.
TO WHERE?


JEHNNA WILL SHOW YOU. THERE IS A KEY THAT SHE MUST FIND. A KEY THAT ONLY SHE CAN TOUCH, AS IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE SCROLLS OF SKELOS.
WHERE IS IT?

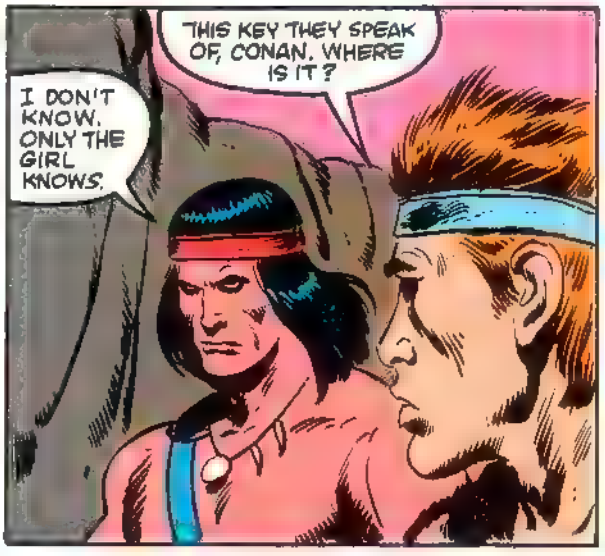
IN A CASTLE. GUARDED BY A WIZARD CALLED THOTH-AMON.
WHAT DOES THIS KEY UNLOCK?
A TREASURE. ONLY SHE CAN PROCURE IT AND ONLY SHE CAN PUT IT TO ITS ULTIMATE USE.
WHEN SHE HAS IT, YOU WILL BRING HER BACK TO ME, AND THEN YOU WILL HAVE YOUR REWARD-- THE RETURN TO LIFE OF THE WOMAN YOU LOVE.
THROUGH MAGIC, WE SHALL BOTH HAVE EVERYTHING WE WANT.
EEEEEEEEK!
JEHNNA!

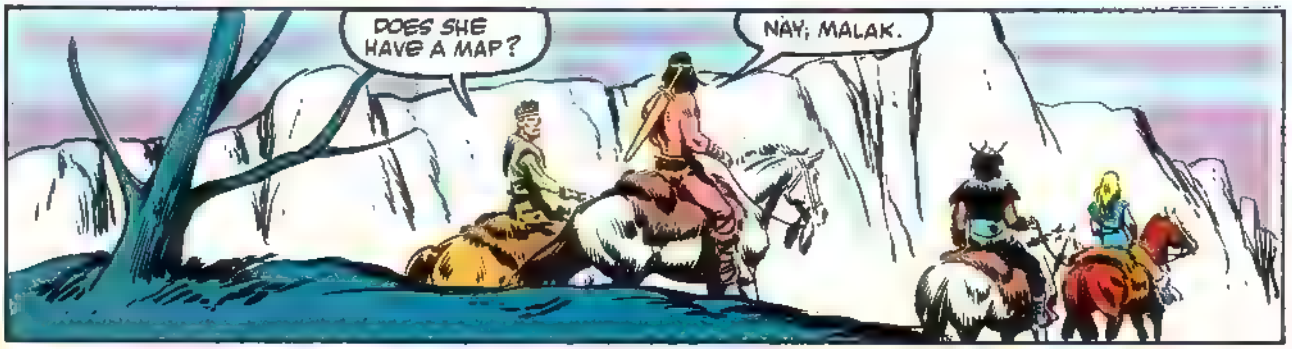
I SAW! I-I SAW IT AGAIN!
IT WAS A DREAM YOU SAW, JEHNNA! ONLY A DREAM!
'TWAS A NIGHTMARE, NOTHING MORE. WILD IMAGININGS. BORN OF EXCITEMENT.
NO! I-I SAW!
GO BACK TO SLEEP, JEHNNA. TOMORROW YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS.
YOU WILL NEED ALL YOUR STRENGTH. YOUR DESTINY IS AT HAND. SLEEP. SHHHH. SLEEP...
ALL OF OUR DESTINYS ARE AT HAND, BOM-BAATA. EVEN CONAN'S. BECAUSE ONCE THE KEY IS SAFELY IN MY NIECE'S HAND, I WANT YOUR SWORD IN CONAN'S HEART!
IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE, MY QUEEN.


HAVE THE ELITE GUARD FOLLOW. THEY WILL STRIKE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT TO HELP YOU.
I DO NOT NEED THEIR HELP, MY QUEEN.

YOU WILL HAVE IT NONETHELESS. CONAN MUST DIE.

MORNING...
CONAN IS SO HANDSOME, BOM-BAATA. BUT WHY DO WE NEED HIM?
THE KEY HAS TO BE STOLEN. FOR THAT, YOU NEED A THIEF.


THIS KEY THEY SPEAK OF, CONAN. WHERE IS IT?
I DON'T KNOW. ONLY THE GIRL KNOWS.


DOES SHE HAVE A MAP?
NAY, MALAK.

"THE GIRL SAYS HER BRAIN IS HER MAP..."
THERE!
BRING HER ! HEH-HEHHH ! FASTER.
WHILE AT THAT SELFSAME MOMENT, MANY LEAGUES DISTANT...
COME, COME. BRING HER, CONAN.

I WILL HAVE HER, CONAN. NOTHING CAN HELP YOU.
NO, CIMMERIAN. WE MUST GO THAT WAY.
OUR JOURNEY IS A MAZE, AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE WAY THROUGH IT.
I BELIEVE YOU, GIRL. BUT THERE IS MAGIC IN THE MAZE, AND I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT IT WITH MAGIC!
AHA! I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, CONAN!
"AKIRO!"
MMMMPH! MMMMPH!
TO THE FIRE WITH OLD WIZARD. ROAST HIM WELL.
AYE. FOR ONCE WE HAVE PARTAKEN OF HIS SCORCHED AND BLACKENED FLESH--

--THE POWER OF HIS MAGIC WILL FLOW IN OUR BLOOD!
HA HAAA!
UMMFF!
CROM!
HA HA! DO YOU KNOW WHAT JEHNNA ASKED ME, CONAN? SHE ASKED ME WHAT THOSE DESERT NOMADS ARE PLANNING TO DO WITH AKIRO. HA HA! "HAVE LUNCH," I TOLD HER.
GHAAAA!
UUUUUHH!
BOMBAATA! HELP THEM!
NO, CHILD. MY PLACE IS WITH YOU.

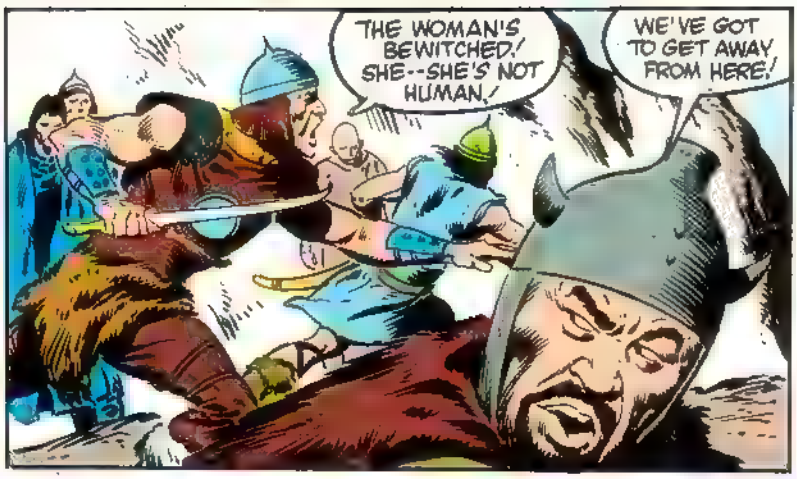
SLAY HIM!
AAAAAAAAAA
THANK YOU. OHHH, THANK YOU.
IT'S THOSE SAVAGES WHO SHOULD THANK ME, FOR SPARING THEM A TERRIBLE STOMACH ACHE. IMAGINE WANTING TO EAT SOMEONE AS OLD AND SOUR AS YOU!
THAT NIGHT...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'VE EVER LEFT THE PALACE.

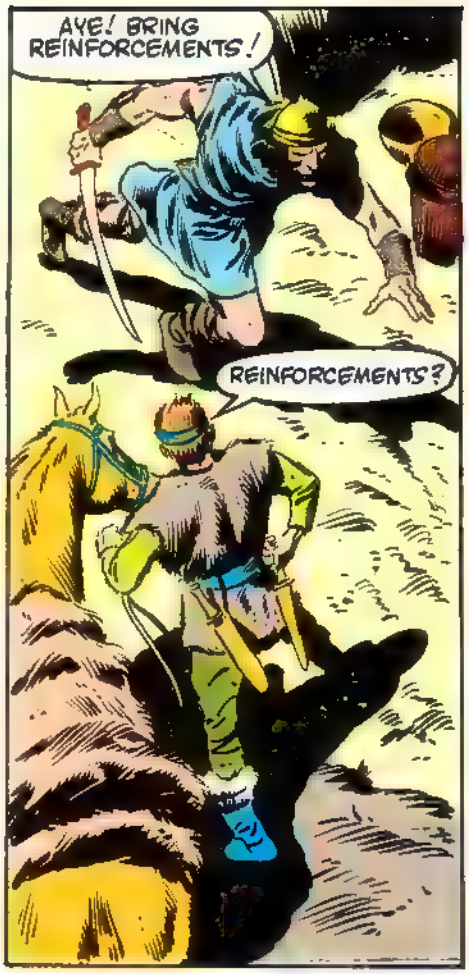
HOW COULD I LIVE LIKE THAT? WHEN THERE IS ALL THIS--
YOU SEE, BARBARIAN, I--
--I WAS BORN WITH THIS BIRTHMARK. IT IS MY DESTINY. I WAS TO GROW IN THE PALACE, TO WAIT FOR THIS MOMENT.
NO!
DO NOT TOUCH HER! EVER!
SO SAID THE SCROLLS OF SKELOS.
YES. IT WAS WRITTEN THERE.
AND THERE...
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
TELL ME ABOUT THIS KEY. WHAT TREASURE DOES IT UNLOCK?
IT ISN'T AN ORDINARY KEY. IT'S A JEWEL. THE HEART OF AHRIMAN.

CAN IT BE WORN?
ONLY BY ME. NO ONE ELSE DARES TOUCH IT. THE HEART OF AHRIMAN ISN'T AN ADORNMENT. IT IS THE ANSWER TO A GREAT QUESTION.
WHAT IS THE QUESTION?
I DON'T KNOW THAT YET, EITHER. WE'LL FIND OUT TOGETHER, WON'T WE?
LATER
IF THERE IS ANYTHING IN THIS VILLAGE THAT YOU LIKE, MALAK, TRY NOT TO TAKE IT.
HMMPH! I KNOW WHEN TO STEAL AND WHEN NOT TO.
HA HAAA! THAT'S IT! HAVE AT THE WENCH!
AYE! GIVE HER WHAT SHE DESERVES!
WHO'LL TAKE A WAGER?

I'LL BET A FULL SACK OF WHEAT AGAINST FIVE CROWNS THAT THEY GUT HER BEFORE SHE CAN LAY THAT STAFF ON ANY ONE OF THEM!
I'LL TAKE THAT WAGER! OH, SHE'LL DIE, ALL RIGHT! BUT NOT BEFORE SHE'S MANAGED TO SPLIT A SKULL OR TWO!
HA HA! GO ON, WENCH! LET'S SEE YOU DANCE AT THE END OF THAT CHAIN!
WHAT DID SHE DO?
SHE CAME WITH THE BANDITS TO RAID OUR VILLAGE. THE OTHERS ARE DEAD. NOW IT IS HER TURN.
SAVE HER! PLEASE! THERE ARE SIX OF THEM AGAINST HER!
HMM! ONE, TWO, THREE...

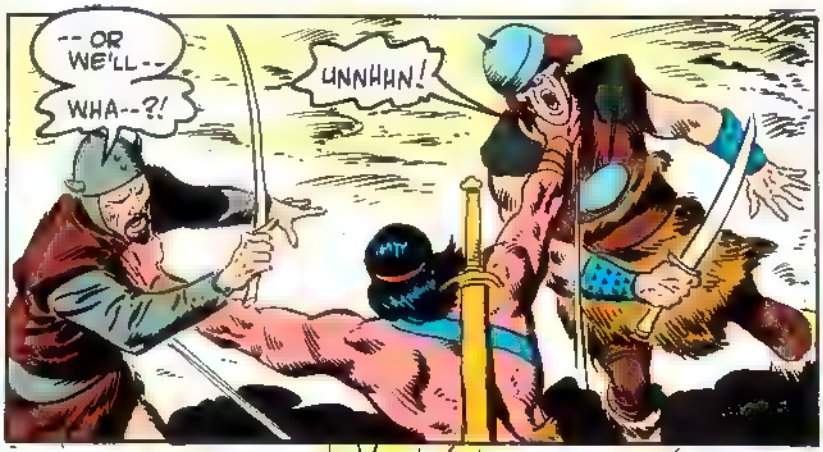
BY CROM! I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, GIRL.
PAH! AND WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IF HE HAS CUT THE CHAIN?
ONE GOOD--
UHHRKK!
AAAGGHH!
WHY YOU SCURVY LITTLE--


THE WOMAN'S BEWITCHED! SHE--SHE'S NOT HUMAN!
WE'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!


AYE! BRING REINFORCEMENTS!
REINFORCEMENTS?

SNIVELLING DOG!
GHAAAA!

YOU! YOU CAUSED THIS! OUT OF OUR WAY, BLAST YOU--


-- OR WE'LL--
WHA--?!
UNNHHN!

GNNGHHH!

AND SO...
YOU'RE A FOOL TO LET THAT GIRL ZULA RIDE WITH US. SHE'S A BANDIT. SHE CAN'T BE TRUSTED.
IF NEED BE, SHE WOULD GIVE HER LIFE FOR US. WHICH IS MORE THAN I WOULD SAY OF YOU.
HOURS LATER, AS THE SUN SETS...
THE CASTLE OF THOTH-AMON. IT HOLDS THE KEY. I CAN FEEL IT SHINING--REACHING OUT TO US.
LET'S GO THERE NOW, CONAN.
YOU'LL LEAD US THERE IN THE MORNING, GIRL.
"TONIGHT, WE MUST REST..."
NO! STOP!
EASY, CHILD. EASY. ALL IS WELL. IT'S ONLY THE DREAM AGAIN.
WHAT IS IN THIS DREAM?
IN THE DREAM, I--
"-- I AM A BABY. I WAKE AND WALK FROM MY ROOM DOWN A CORRIDOR. I AM LOOKING FOR MY MOTHER. I GO INTO A BEDROOM, AND THERE--

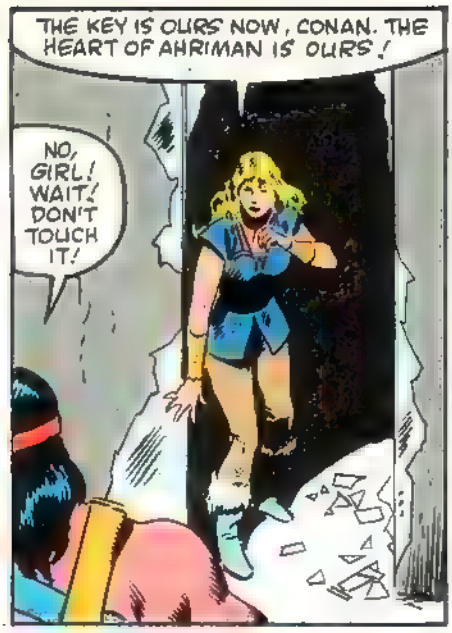
"-- SOMEBODY IS STANDING OVER MY MOTHER AND FATHER, HOLDING TWO KNIVES. ONE KNIFE PLUNGES DOWN INTO MY FATHER'S HEART...
" AND BEFORE MY MOTHER CAN EVEN STIR--
" -- THE SECOND KNIFE SLICES OPEN HER THROAT!"
WHO HELD THE KNIVES?
MY AUNT. SHE WHO IS NOW QUEEN. TARAMIS.
SHHH, CHILD. SLEEP. IT WAS ONLY A DREAM YOU WERE WAKED BY. ONLY A DREAM.
LATER THAT NIGHT, ON THE BALCONY OF THOTH-AMON'S GLITTERING CRYSTAL PALACE...
NOW.

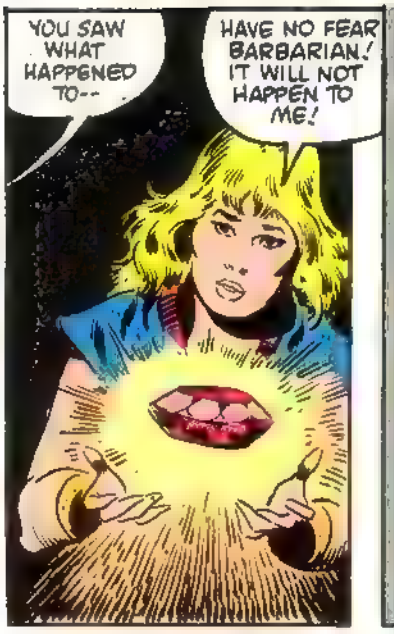
SLEEP, CHILD, IN THE MORNING, YOU WILL TOUCH THE HEART OF AHRIMAN, THE FIRST TO DO SO IN A THOUSAND YEARS.
DAWN...
GONE! SHE'S GONE!
AKIRO! WHERE IS SHE?
IN THERE.
SHE WAS TAKEN BY A GIANT BIRD, A BIRD OF SMOKE.
HOW DO WE GET IN? IS THERE ANOTHER ENTRANCE?
AYE, THERE IS.
JUST BELOW THE SHORE.
THAT STAIRCASE.
THESE CURSED STEPS! DO THEY WIND UP AND UP FOREVER?

HE'S OPENED IT! QUICKLY NOW!
LET'S FOL--
UNNNGHH!
WHA--?! A HUGE MIRROR OF SOME KIND--CUTTING US OFF FROM THE CHAMBER WITHIN!
I THANK YOU FOR BRINGING THE GIRL TO ME, CONAN. NOW YOUR JOURNEY IS OVER.
NOT YET. WHERE IS JEHNNA?
SAFE WITH ME.
BUT YOU, YOU ARE NOT SAFE.
HA HA HAAAA! COME TO ME, CIMMERIAN!
COME TO ME!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
CROM'S FIENDS!

GRRRAAARRHHH
UNNGH!!
VERY WELL, MONSTER! COME ON, THEN! MAGIC'S SPAWNED YOU--NOW LET'S SEE HOW YOU FARE AGAINST RAZOR-HONED STEEL!
ARRRHHHHHHHHHH
CROM BLAST ME! I-I MISSED HIM!
YET--YET HE HOWLS IN AGONY! WHY SHOULD--? UNLESS--
THE MIRRORS! IT'S THE MIRRORS!
SMASH ENOUGH OF THEM, AND THE APE WILL BE--
--FINISHED! AYE!

AND ONLY ONE MIRROR LEFT! IF, INDEED, IT IS A MIRROR!
I'VE GOT YOU NOW, THOTH-AMON!
CROM'S DEVILS!
UUUUUHHHH!
HE STAGGERS, BUT--BUT HE DOES NOT BLEED!
THE : GASP: HEART! MUST HAVE THE--
-- THE HEART :CHOKE: OF--
--OF AHRIMAN--!!
OOOoooHH!
THE SORCERER...
"...GONE..."


THE KEY IS OURS NOW, CONAN. THE HEART OF AHRIMAN IS OURS!
NO, GIRL! WAIT! DON'T TOUCH IT!

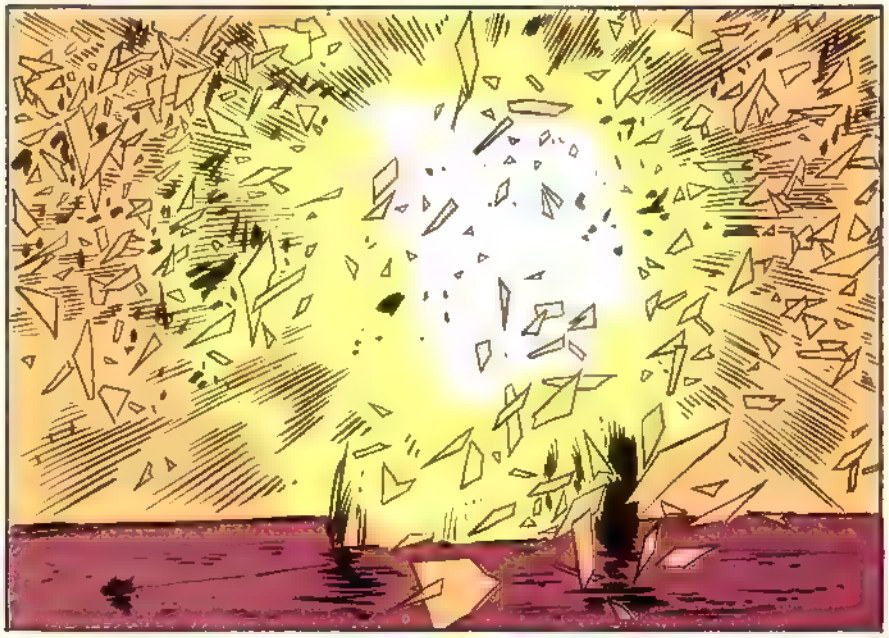

YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO--
HAVE NO FEAR BARBARIAN! IT WILL NOT HAPPEN TO ME!

WELL DONE, CIMMERIAN! YOU HANDLED THE SITUATION EXACTLY AS I WOULD HAVE DONE IT MYSELF!

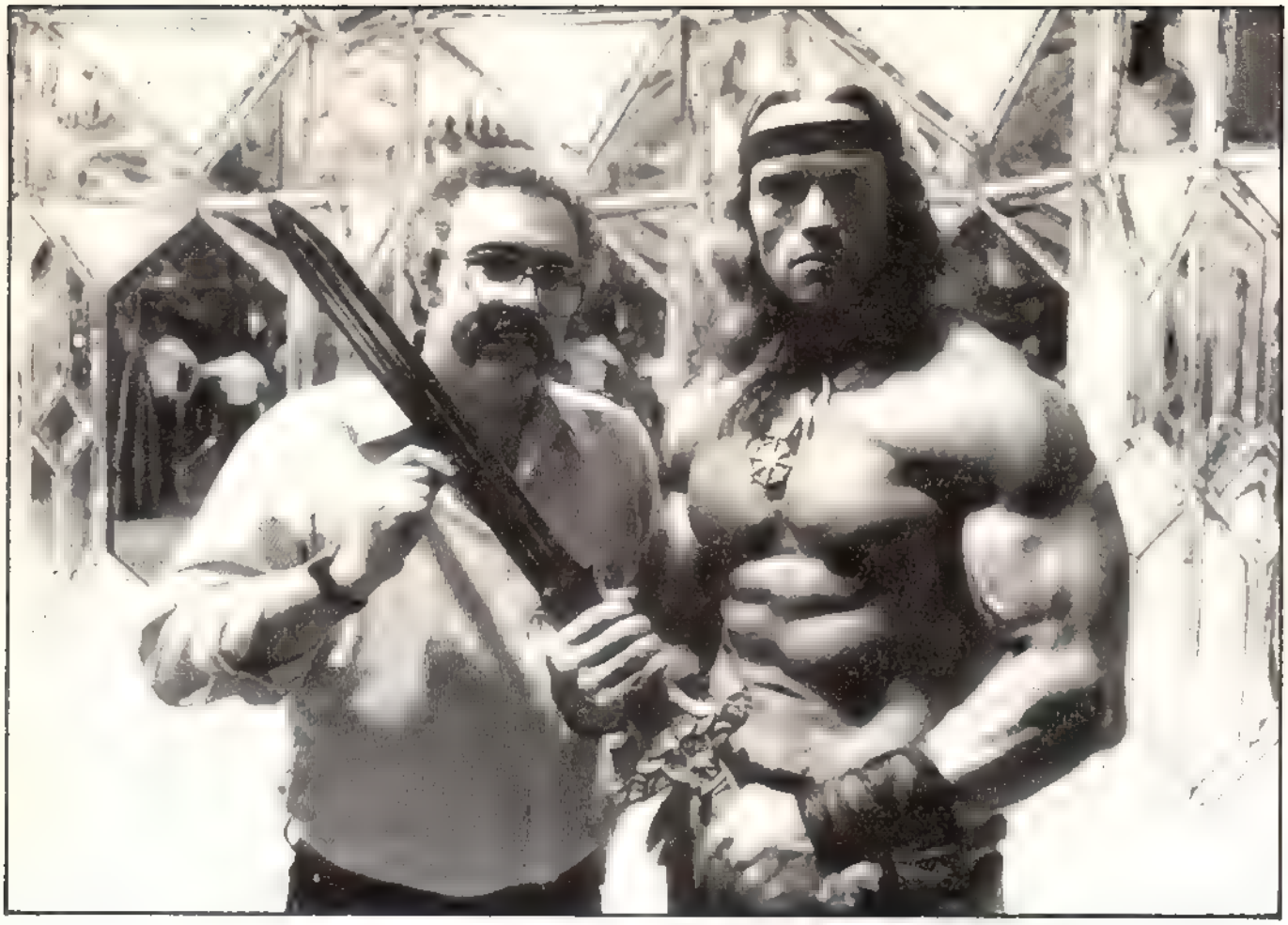
THE ENTIRE PALACE-- SHAKING! AS THOUGH IT WERE IN THE GRIP OF SOME GIANT AND MALEVOLENT HAND!
OUT! EVERY-ONE!

FOLLOW ME!
OOOH!

MALAK! THE OARS! BEFORE THE ENTIRE--
JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!



AKIRO--?!!?
ALL AN ILLUSION!



Arnold *and author* **Paul M. Sammon**, *on the Conan set.*

CELLULOID DELTOIDS:

BEHIND THE SCENES AT CONAN II

BY PAUL M. SAMMON

In the summer of 1982, in theatres across the country, these words flashed across the screen: *That which does not kill us makes us stronger.* That quote (by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche) preceded the opening of the hit film CONAN THE BARBARIAN, the first screen treatment of the immortal Robert E. Howard character who initially drew breath in the December 1932 issue of WEIRD TALES. That quote also perfectly encapsulates the philosophy and appeal of Conan, whose motto might be—"If you want it, take it. And if something gets in your way—cut it down."

Conan! Thief. Barbarian. Warrior. King. Destined to wear the jeweled crown of Aquilonia upon a troubled brow. As portrayed by the seven times Mr. Olympia and five times Mr. Universe title winner, Arnold Schwarzenegger, CONAN THE BARBARIAN ushered in a new screen legend, detailing the origins and early manhood of the hero from Cimmeria. And now producer Dino De Laurentiis and Universal Pictures present the *second* Conan film, CONAN THE DESTROYER. According to its star, CONAN THE DESTROYER is very aptly titled. For if the essence of the second Conan adventure could be summed up in a single word, it would be *physical*.

"CONAN THE DESTROYER has even more action, fantasy, and combat than the first film," Schwarzenegger says. "The fights are terrific, the stunts are incredible. In this movie Conan's really honed his strengths and skills and he's not afraid to use them."

Indeed, CONAN THE DESTROYER continues with the premises set forth in the first film and adds its own unique brand of violence. As the second Cimmerian film opens, Conan is still mourning the death of Valeria (played in CONAN THE BARBARIAN by dancer/actress Sandahl Bergman). But then the barbarian is offered the chance to resurrect his lost love by the evil sorceress Queen Taramis (SUPERMAN II's Sarah Douglas)—for a price.

First Conan and a small band of adventurers must steal two great treasures, the Heart of Ahriman and the Golden Horn, and then return their plunder to the wicked city of Shadizar where Taramis rules with an iron hand. What follows is an action-packed quest in the grand Howard tradition, with Conan battling ape-men, evil wizards, lost civilizations and a magical Smoke Bird before grappling in mortal combat with his greatest adversary—Dagoth, the Dreaming God, a winged creature from Hell.

"CONAN THE DESTROYER is much more violent in many ways than the first film even though we are going to get a PG rating this time out," Schwarzenegger explains. "We just don't focus in on where the sword hits. On the other hand, I think Conan's character is a lot closer to the personality he has in the books and comics in this picture than it was in the first film. Conan really gets into *action* here, battles it out in every corner he goes. And he has no patience; to Conan, dialogue is a waste. The only thing that counts, the one way by which he wants to get rid of his problems, is by the sword."

But wait a moment. Is it possible to produce a truly violent Conan film with

that PG rating? According to Schwarzenegger, "The bottom line is pretty much the same in both films. Conan is good and he destroys evil. I think the R rating on the first CONAN movie might have had more to do with its sex and nudity than violence, because there is plenty of action in CONAN THE DESTROYER, believe me. There's also more humor. I get to play a drunk scene in this second film that's pretty funny." And as CONAN THE DESTROYER'S line producer Raffaella De Laurentiis puts it, the second CONAN's PG also carries a nice bonus. "This way," De Laurentiis explains, "CONAN THE DESTROYER can be seen by the millions of kids who complained that they couldn't get in to see CONAN THE BARBARIAN because of its R rating."

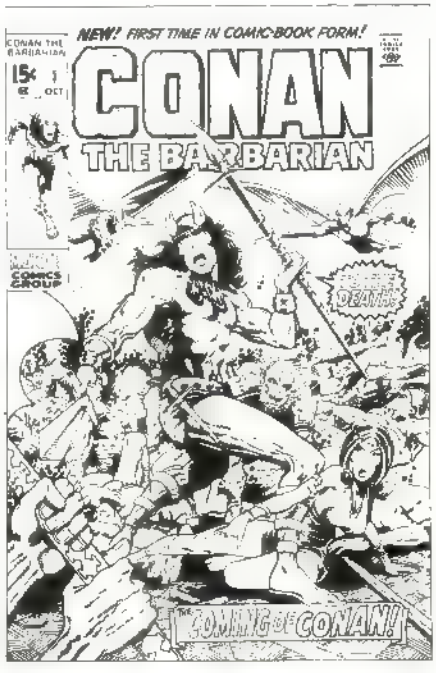
Of course, Conan did not spring full-blown from the brow of either Arnold Schwarzenegger or Raffaella De Laurentiis. The first Conan story in that 1932 WEIRD TALES (called a "pulp" magazine because it was printed on cheap, rough paper still impregnated with bits of wood) was titled "The Phoenix on the Sword." Its author, Robert E. Howard, was a tall, beer-drinking Texan; one of his favorite sports was boxing. Yet despite such jobs as working as a hired hand in the neighboring oil fields, Howard was also a sensitive, erudite man who loved history and poetry. He was a prolific writer, producing scores of short stories in his brief lifetime and creating such other characters as Solomon Kane, King Kull, and Bran Mak Morn.

But it is on Conan, the brooding warrier from Cimmeria, that Howard's ultimate fame rests. Howard wrote 21 full or partial Conan stories during his lifetime. At the age of 30, however, on the news of the imminent death of his mother (to whom, according to your persuasion, the author was exceptionally or unhealthily close), Howard went out to his car, pulled a borrowed handgun from the glove compartment and shot himself in the head. He died that same day, in 1936.

The original Conan tales were kept alive over the following years through the efforts of a small, devoted following (primarily two men; L. Sprague DeCamp and Glenn Lord). Eventually fans of the tales began writing their own Conan stories, and in the early 1950's all the existing Conan works were put into a series of hard-cover books by The Gnome Press. In 1966 Lancer Books, a paperback company, introduced a whole new generation to the barbarian from Cimmeria with their own Conan titles. And in the early 1970's Marvel Comics began to produce all-new three color Conan adventures (first through artist Barry Windsor-Smith, then John Buscema, then others). These titles spread the fame of the thief who would be king to millions of other new-found fans.

Today over 30 different Conan books, in both hard covers and soft, are still in print and available through a variety of different publishers. No less than three Marvel comics now feature the character, and Conan has his own daily strip that appears in close to 100 newspapers.

But where was Hollywood? These types of impressive publishing figures were bound to attract filmmakers. So it was that in 1977 Arnold Schwarzenegger (born in 1947 in Graz, Austria), a multiple



1st issue of **Marvel's** *Conan.*

bodybuilding award winner who had turned to acting in such films as HERCULES IN NEW YORK, THE LONG GOODBYE, STAY HUNGRY, PUMPING IRON, THE VILLIAN, and THE JAYNE MANSFIELD STORY was eating in a Hollywood health food restaurant when he found his life about to radically change. For it was in that Sunset Boulevard eatery that Schwarzenegger was first approached by producer Ed Pressman with the idea of portraying CONAN on the screen. Although Arnold had never heard of Conan, Schwarzenegger was impressed by Pressman's tenacity and Conan's colorful history. The champion weightlifter began to read the Conan stories and was shown the striking Conan artwork of Frank Frazetta; impressed, Schwarzenegger then signed a five-picture contract to portray the barbarian from Cimmeria.

The first result of that deal was CONAN THE BARBARIAN, which grossed over $100 million worldwide. Written and directed by John Milius, designed by Ron Cobb, CONAN THE BARBARIAN not only featured the aforementioned sex and nudity but plenty of beheadings; the young Conan went from a free barbarian to a slave to a gladiator to a warrior thirsting for revenge against the evil sorcerer Thulsa Doom, who early in the picture had decapitated Conan's mother.

Filmed entirely in Spain from January through May of 1981 and released in the U.S.A. by Universal Pictures on May 21, 1982, produced by Pressman, Buzz Feitshans, Dino De Laurentiis and his daughter Raffaella, CONAN THE BARBARIAN was a tough shoot. Although its leading cast was composed of world-class athletes (not only Bergman and Schwarzenegger but champion surfer Gerry Lopez as well), the first Conan film was done under grueling conditions. The cast spent months training in the traditions of martial arts and oriental swordmanship under Kiyoshi Yamazaki, a fourth degree black belt in Karate and master of the *Katana*, the samurai sword (Yamazaki also had a cameo in the first film). CONAN THE BARBARIAN's cast was also under the strict supervision of the film's stunt coordinator, Terry Leonard, a highly respected stuntman in his own right.

But even with such professional guidance, CONAN THE BARBARIAN was no picnic. For example, Schwarzenegger often found himself immersed half-naked in freezing snow for hours on end, or being kicked by camels. And on the first day of shooting, an overeager stunt dog knocked Arnold off a ten foot cliff, resulting in severe scratches and bruising when Schwarzenegger landed in a briar patch at the foot of the rock.

Yet director John Milius was still proud of his barbarian. "If there hadn't been an Arnold around for this film," Milius was fond of saying, "we'd of had to build him." Schwarzenegger himself has positive memories of CONAN I, as his recollections attest.

"I think Conan's character was set up very well in the first film," Arnold now says. "John Milius explained where he came from, the justifications of what Conan did and what he would do in the

future. CONAN THE BARBARIAN was a very artistic project, because Milius really did his homework and created an incredibly realistic world for Conan to live in. That film has gotten the most wonderful, positive reactions from various people; it was a *great* origin story.

"But as great as the first Conan film was," Arnold concludes, "the director (Richard Fleischer) and the scripwriters of CONAN THE DESTROYER thought that the second CONAN movie should not get too heavy and philosophical. It should have more fantasy, for one thing, and really point out how tough the character is. For instance, at one point in CONAN II, I and my friends have just stolen the Golden Horn from the Jade Temple when we find our way blocked by the Black Warriors, who really own the horn. There are a lot more of them than us, and they're all heavily armed. They say they want the horn; some of the people in my group say maybe we should keep it, maybe we should put it back. And this goes back and forth for awhile, all this arguing. Meanwhile I've been standing on the sidelines, not saying a word, getting more and more impatient. Finally I can't take it anymore and yell 'Enough talk!' And I surprise everybody by pulling out my knife, throwing it, and killing the leader of the Black Warriors right on the spot. Which of course immediately brings them all down on our heads.

"But that's Conan."

CONAN THE DESTROYER first saw life through the story efforts of Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway, two men who in the past had had a strong association with Marvel's Conan Comic books. However, after a number of Thomas and Conway's attempts at a Conan screenplay (titled CONAN, KING OF THIEVES) were deemed unacceptable by Raffaella De Laurentiis, scriptwriter Stanley Mann (who recently did the scenario for the filmed version of FIRESTARTER) was brought in and tapped for the final CONAN II script.

With a star and script in tow, De Laurentiis then began the search for a crew to film CONAN THE DESTROYER. The man ultimately chosen to film CONAN II was cinematographer Jack Cardiff, who has also functioned as a director on certain films (one such was 1960's SONS AND LOVERS, which won him an Academy Award nomination). In 1946 Cardiff did win an Oscar for his color photography of BLACK NARCISSUS, a story concerning a group of nuns trying to establish an outpost in a remote part of the Himalayan mountains. (Cardiff also shot such films as THE AFRICAN QUEEN and THE VIKINGS.) "For CONAN THE DESTROYER," Cardiff says, "I'm trying to establish a deeply colorful mood, one which will, I hope, reflect the exotic fairy tale qualities of the script. If there's anything in the film that sparkles, for instance, it *sparkles*. I'm using special filters on the sets to make them sparkle, as well as using every trick in the book to produce all kinds of strange atmospheric conditions. What we're aiming for in CONAN THE DESTROYER is a savage splendor."

Zula ***(Grace Jones)*** *sticks it to the locals.*

The chief architect of this splendor is director Richard Fleischer. In 1947 Fleischer won an Academy Award for his feature documentary DESIGN FOR DEATH (which, through captured wartime footage, traced the Japanese culture from its Shinto religious origins through its involvement in World War II). Film buffs will recognize that Fleischer is the son of animation pioneer Max Fleischer, guiding light behind the early Betty Boop, Popeye, and Superman cartoons. As a director, however, *Richard* Fleischer is responsible for such classics as 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, FANTASTIC VOYAGE and 1958's savage tale of Norsemen and their Long Ships, THE VIKINGS.

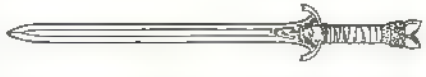
"In fact," the director of CONAN THE DESTROYER explains, "THE VIKINGS is really the reason why I was hired to direct CONAN II. John Milius—who by the way, I don't know—once said that THE VIKINGS really influenced his life, that it was his favorite movie. Apparently Milius ran it two or three times for Raffaella De Laurentiis while he was making CONAN THE BARBARIAN and kept saying, 'This is the kind of picture I want to make!

"Well, when I saw the first CONAN film I immediately noticed how much of THE VIKINGS was in it. Maybe not that scene in THE VIKINGS where Kirk Douglas has his eye clawed out by a falcon, but there were still some similarities. For instance, in THE VIKINGS I had a character swing a big anchor on a chain over his head and in CONAN THE BARBARIAN Arnold does the same thing with a lamp, in the same way, just before he lets it go to set fire to the temple of Thulsa Doom.

"Anyway, when I was offered CONAN THE DESTROYER and got together with Raffaella, she told me she'd said to Dino, 'Since we tried to copy THE VIKINGS so much on CONAN I, why don't we get the man who *made* that film for CONAN II?' So here I am."

Was Fleischer aware of the Conan character before he saw the first film? "I was aware of him," the director replies, "but I wasn't a great fan or follower. Although I should point out that since then I've read all the Conan comics and books that I could get my hands on, mostly to prepare myself for the kinds of images that they were using. Comics have their own techniques and compositions, and I've tried to get that kind of feeling into this film.

"I must say," Fleischer continues, "that I liked CONAN THE BARBARIAN very much; I thought it was very good. It was a little heavy and too serious, but my main objection was that I felt that you didn't see nearly enough of Arnold's body. I understand Milius' idea was to keep Arnold clothed as often as he could, so that people wouldn't confuse CONAN with a Hercules picture. Personally, I thought that a grand mistake. My big disappointment on CONAN I is that I went expecting to see this fantastic physique—and I'm sure other people went for the same reason—and I didn't see it. It was always covered in chain mail and furs and camouflage paint. So in CONAN THE DESTROYER, Arnold is undressed 99% of the time. Now you can see that wonderful body."



When asked if the director was looking for a specific "look" for Arnold's body in CONAN II, Fleischer says "The first thing I told Arnold was that I didn't think his muscles were well-defined enough. Then I asked him if he could give me *more* definition. I'm sure he thought I was crazy—I mean, just *look*

Director Richard Fleischer explains a fight scene to Conan.

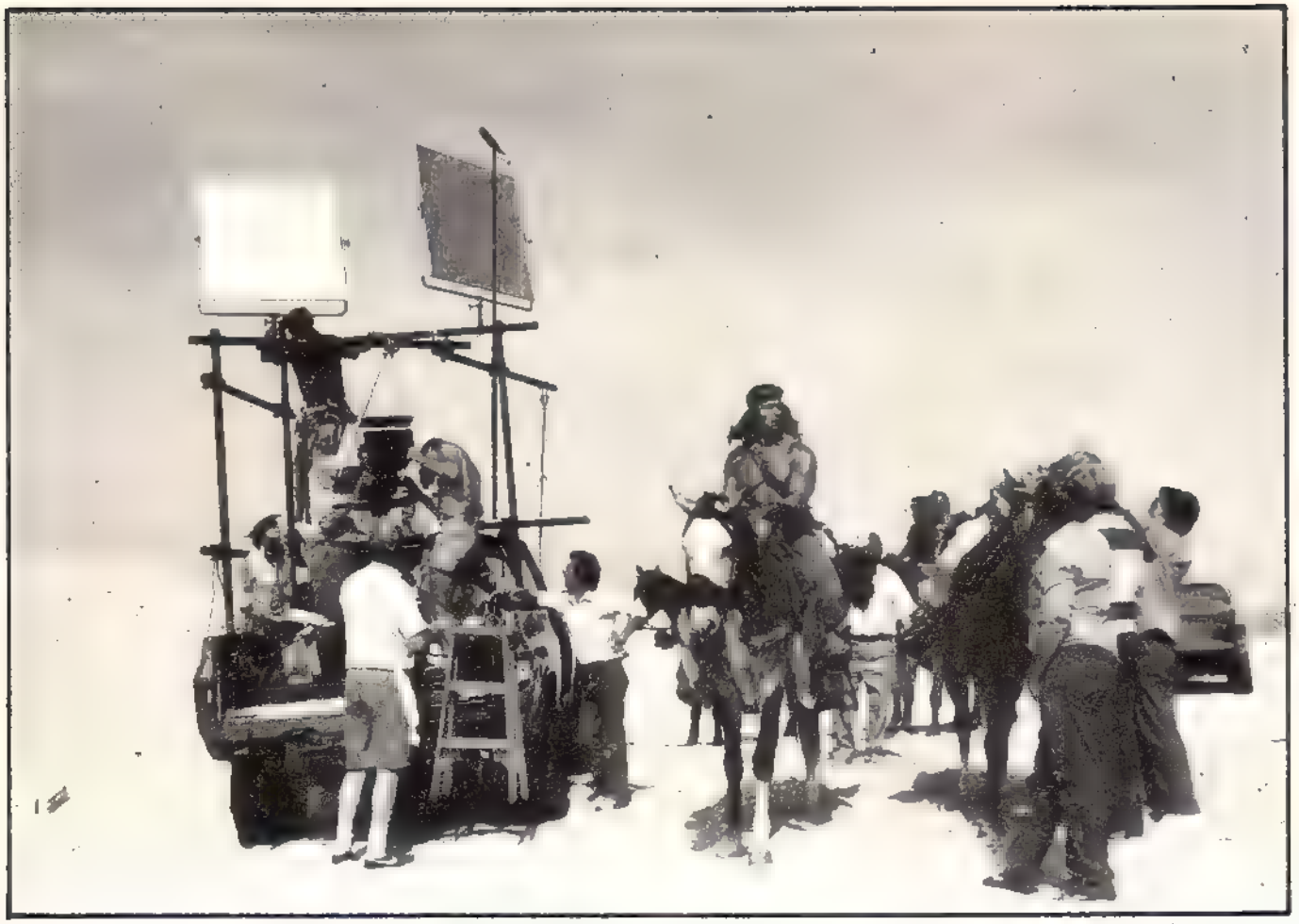
at Arnold—but he immediately said sure, no problem. I then told him that I didn't want him to look like either a body builder or an ordinary strong man but something in between. And he accomplished that perfectly. He now really looks like the strongest thing that's ever lived."

"I really couldn't believe it when Dick came to watch me work out with the sword that day and asked if I could put on more muscles," Schwarzenegger confirms. "He's telling *me*, a 13 time world champion in body building, that? Then I remembered that John Milius had always said that slave labor doesn't give you definition, and for his relatively realistic film, a less defined body was right. But Fleischer *wanted* that definition, so my waist is smaller on this film. My weight's about the same as it was on CONAN I—220 pounds—but I've reduced my body fat level by two to three percent. CONAN THE DESTROYER is more of an adventure-fantasy than the first film so in those terms Dick was right."

To attain the leaner, more defined Schwarzenegger physique on display in CONAN II, Arnold first concentrated on the usual stretching and limbering techniques he used on the first film; other CONAN I techniques he also incorporated were such agility exercises as climbing trees, running up staircases backwards, etc. Included with these earlier techniques was a new mental attitude Schwarzenegger adopted for CONAN II; "I imagined that I was training for an important competition, and actually trained *harder* than I did on the first film." This new schedule included training *twice* each day, six days a week with weights; each twice-daily session lasted an hour a session. Schwarzenegger began his training in August of 1983 and continued it right up until early February 1984, the end of CONAN II's shooting schedule. Three times a week Schwarzenegger would add to this basic routine by running four miles each day, augmented by 20 minute-long stationary bike workouts every other day and daily 15 minute waist and calf exercises.

"As for diet," Schwarzenegger continues, "I ate four times a day, all light meals, concentrating on fish, chicken, eggs, and beef. I also took fifty liver and yeast pills a day, which is my way of getting a lot of energy. Then I stayed away from fatty foods and took a great deal of Vitamin C, paying really careful attention to keeping my body active and muscular. Because the bottom line in CONAN II was a body that looked defined and muscular while it was in motion, and not just posed to stand there looking good."

But an exercised body and good diet are not all that are required for your basic Hollywood barbarian. CONAN THE BARBARIAN featured extensive, intricate swordplay, and CONAN II is no different in this respect. For this aspect of the film Schwarzenegger spent a half-hour each day in rigorous sword practice utilizing the same Ron Cobb-designed Atlantean sword (whose hilt and pommel had been cast by Tim Huchthhausen of Los Angeles and whose blade had been forged by Jody Samson of Burbank). The 10 pound, 36-inch long Atlantean sword prototype had originally been manufactured at a cost of $10,000 but, as Schwarzenegger explains, "I think all the older swords from the first film were wiped out. So Graham Sumner, who was the property master on CONAN I as well as CONAN II, sent six fiberglass swords to me in Los Angeles in the summer of '83 to practice with before I came down to Mexico. We used those fiberglass swords in the film, too, mostly for rehearsals. But for important shots and close-ups I had one metal sword that I used throughout the



On location in the **Samalayucca Desert**.

filming. They made that one up specially for CONAN THE DESTROYER."

Not only Arnold Schwarzenegger and his Atlantean sword would be returning from CONAN THE BARBARIAN; familiar faces both in front and behind the camera who had worked on CONAN I returned for CONAN II. This included both Raffaella De Laurentiis and Dino De Laurentiis as well as Kiyoshi Yamazaki, who would train CONAN THE DESTROYER's principle cast in weapons handling as well as become the film's fight coordinator. Artists William Stout (a production illustrator on CONAN I) and Pierluigi Basille (Conan II's production designer) would again pick up the pens and brushes they had used for CONAN THE BARBARIAN and return to their easels for CONAN II.

Finally, the Asian-American actor Mako, who had first been seen in CONAN I as the comical wizard of the Mounds, would return as the same character in CONAN THE DESTROYER. This time, though, with a new name—Akiro.

One key crew member new to the Conan legend is CONAN II stunt coordinator Vic Armstrong. A man who doubled for Harrison Ford in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, who worked on INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM and ROMANCING THE STONE, and who contributed stunts to over 70 other films (including many of the Roger Moore James Bond pictures), Armstrong's CONAN II duties involved not only setting up and choreographing the film's many stunts, but teaching much of the cast how to ride horses.

That cast includes faces new to the Conan Myth. CONAN THE DESTROYER features the debut performance of both basketball legend Wilt Chamberlain (as Bombatta; although in post-production Chamberlain's lines were dubbed by another actor), and rock singer Grace Jones (as Zula). CONAN II also showcases the talents of Tracey Walter (Malak, Conan's sidekick), Olivia D'Abo (The Princess Jehnna), Pat Roach (Thoth Amon), Ferdy Mayne (the leader of the Black Warriors), and Jeff Corey (as the Grand Vizier).

With an emphasis on action, magic and humor, it's obvious that the tone of CONAN THE DESTROYER is different from its predecessor. But what of the character of CONAN himself? Schwarzenegger again; "For one thing, revenge is out. Conan got rid of that feeling in the last film.

"But even when I first began CONAN THE BARBARIAN I didn't set my mind on any preconceived notions of how to play the character. I did read all the books and stories but I still spent hours with John Milius discussing how he, the director, saw Conan. Then when we were filming I began to get some of my own ideas of the character."

Now in CONAN THE DESTROYER a few years have elapsed since his adventures in the first film. Conan's become more experienced, he's more at ease with himself and his position in the world. He really loves the joy of adventure now. Since he's much more skilled in fighting, much more slick about knowing how to break into places and steal things he goes out, does it and has a good time.

"But at the same time," Schwarzenegger continues, "in the back of his mind there's always Valeria. And Conan's still afraid of magic. Nothing has changed there."

With a budget of $16.7 million set for CONAN II (as opposed to the first film's $17 million, the cast and crew set up their hedquarters in Mexico City's Estudios Churubusco, the largest such facility in all of Latin America. Although the first Conan film had been filmed entirely in Spain, Mexico was chosen for CONAN THE DESTROYER for its varied geographical features, excellent film technicians and—most importantly—the dollar-to-film buying power of the constantly devaluated peso. During its 9½ week shooting schedule,

CONAN II would be filmed in four soundstages and three backlots at Churubusco as well as eleven other out-of-studio locations scattered throughout Mexico.

Yet at the very beginning of filming, on November 1, a humorous (in hindsight) incident occurred which nearly set off an international incident, one that almost permanently shut down both CONAN II and DUNE (the science fiction extravaganza that was shooting at Churubusco at the same time with many of the same production crew members).

Full details on the incident remain vague. But on November 1, 1983, some key CONAN II actors were relaxing by their hotel pool near Samalayucca (due to a unit publicist who had forgotten to alert the cast) when they suddenly found themselves besieged by an unwanted group of Mexican journalists and photographers. After trying to explain to the photojournalists that interviews would be given later, one photographer stubbornly persisted in taking photos even after being asked not to. One of the CONAN actors became angered and forcibly removed the film from the journalist's camera. When the photographer indignantly protested this treatment, other cast members promptly responded in kind—by dropping their pants and mooning the assembled journalists.

In America, this sort of incident would have been treated with smiles and little else from the local press. But this was Mexico. The film-less photographer bitterly complained to the Ciudad Juarez Press Association, and in turn the President of that group sent telegrams of complaint to the Censor of the "Secretaria de Gobernacion." What had begun as a minor incident was snowballing into a national news story. The Censor immediately shut down the filming of CONAN II and DUNE (which that day was also shooting in Samalayucca) for several hours following the journalists claims of "offenses against their dignity." At this point the Ministry of External Relations and the Governor of the State denounced the incident.

But as he always did for Howard, Conan bounced back. Raffaella De Laurentiis publicly expressed her apologies, assuring that those responsible for such a disagreeable situation would be deported from the country (and, in fact, certain actors were). This seemed to be a stroke in the right direction; on the same day the Censor lifted his shutdown and filming again began. But the delay had cost both DUNE and CONAN II approximately $20,000 in terms of the interruption of their respective shoots.

Finally, with its growing pains behind them, the 200-plus cast and crew members of CONAN THE DESTROYER could get down to the serious business of filmmaking.

CONAN II opens with Schwarzenegger praying at a rough alter, his thoughts on Valeria. Nearby, his companion Malak is busily burying the jewels from their latest theft. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, Conan and Malak are set upon by horse-riding warriors of murderous intent. Barbarian that he is, Conan chops first and asks questions later. He kills many of the riders outright; those who try to capture him in a net soon pay the price as one of the warriors (actually a full-sized dummy) is himself netted by Schwarzenegger and thrown far away from the action.

Conan is then approached by two mysterious riders. One, the leader of the group, removes her helmet to reveal the evil Queen Taramis of Shadizar. The other rider sits quietly, but meancingly, nearby on his horse. A huge man, ferocious, scowling; Bombatta, Captain of the Royal Guard.

Bombatta *(Wilt Chamberlain) peruses the sports section of the Hyborean Times.*

Wilt Chamberlain *and his* **Bombatta 'stick'.**

Although Bombatta is Wilt Chamberlain's first role in a major motion picture, this 7'1", sports superstar is certainly no media newcomer. Born in 1936 in Philadelphia, Chamberlain played basketball with the Harlem Globe Trotters, The Philadelpia Warriors, The Philadelphia Seventy-Sixers, and the Los Angeles Lakers; along the way he became one of the United States' best known and most honored sports figures. "Although I hadn't really heard about Conan before," Chamberlain admits, "I've been a movie buff for a long, long time, and because of that I knew about Dino's and Dick Fleischer's work. And Arnold is ■ friend. So after turning down scripts for 15 years, when I finally got offered something as adventurous as CONAN THE DESTROYER, I jumped at it."

As for the character of Bombatta (for which he wears a knotted, snarled and tangled wig), Chamberlain says that "When I first came into the part Bombatta was sort of a confusing character. I wasn't sure whether he was ■ good guy or a bad guy. So we all had to sit down and talk about that, to establish my character a bit more. And now I am *definitely* a baddy, and I enjoy that. You can have a lot more fun being a heavy.

"On the other hand," Chamberlain continues, "I don't consider myself an actor for a second; I consider myself a personality that is fortunate enough to be in a film. And since CONAN II is such an action-packed, adventurous movie I couldn't ask for anything better my first time out."

Chamberlain's shaping of Bombatta did not end at the scripting stage. Once in Mexico City, the actor quickly realized that most of the cast, particularly Schwarzenegger, were very adept at handling swords. "But I thought we needed another weapon for Bombatta," Chamberlain explains. "So I went to the prop master and I sat down with him and we designed the Bombatta stick, ■ gruesome-looking shaft ending in a solid metal ball studded with spikes. Something like a mace. In the film, I use it with a lot more barbarism than you would the sophistication of a sword. My only style with the Bombatta stick is power; since it's extremely heavy, I just heft and smash."

Besides wielding the Bombatta stick, Chamberlain also spent three weeks prior to filming being trained (in October 1983) by Yamazaki in the rudiments of sword fighting; moves, counter moves, defensive positions, and so on. Chamberlain then went on to do some of his own stunts in the movie: "After all," he says, "it was kind of hard to find another seven foot tall black guy to wrestle with Arnold Schwarzenegger."

Yet it wasn't doing some of his own stunts in CONAN THE DESTROYER—"We always had a lot of careful preparation before *any* stunt—", but some of the more mundane, behind the scenes details of filmmaking that surprised Chamberlain. "When I watch professional basketball games now," Chamberlain explains, "I very seldom enjoy them. I'm too close to the sport; I see all the mistakes. Now I'm afraid that having made one I'll feel the same way about movies.

"For example, there's a scene in CONAN II where we're all in the Crystal Palace of Thoth Amon and it's supposed to be cold in there and you can see our breath. Who would have thought that trick involved getting some dental work done, making a mouthpiece, putting some dry ice in it, sticking it in the back of your throat, and then inhaling through your nose and blowing out that vapor?"

As for the star of CONAN THE DESTROYER, Schwarzenegger soon found that he and Chamberlain had more in common than chunks of dry ice. "Wilt's big on weights," Arnold points out. "He'd get so crazy; just before a fight scene he'd roll out ■ forty pound dumbell and pump out a set."

After Taramis has promised Conan that she can raise Valeria from the dead, Conan and Malak follow the Queen and Bombatta back to her city of Shadizar. Shadizar was also featured in CONAN I, and for that film the huge, standing El Condor set in Almeria, Spain represented this ancient Hyborean metropolis. However, CONAN II's Shadizar was actually in the Pachucha area of Mexico, erected at an old mill built by the Spaniards two hundred years ago. Used to originally process silver, this enormous structure is now known as The Hacienda.

While in Shadizar, Conan is given a task—steal the Heart of Ahriman, a fabulous gem which only the queen's virginal niece, the Princess Jehnna, can safely touch without fear of instant death. But the gem is being guarded in his Crystal Palace by the powerful wizard Thoth-Amon (played by Pat Roach; unlike CONAN I's villain Thulsa Doom, who was portrayed by James Earl Jones and who was actually a sorcerer out of Howard's King Kull stories, Thoth-Amon is lifted directly from the old Conan tales themselves). If the adventurers *can* manage to abscond with the Heart of Ahriman, they must then use it as a key to obtaining the Golden Horn—the terrible ornament which will awaken Shadizar's Dreaming God.

With Bombatta along to make sure Jehnna stays a virgin, Conan and his companions leave Shadizar on their quest, unaware that a small group of the Queen's Elite Guards are secretly following them to aid Bombatta in an eventual betrayal. Worse, Conan is also unaware that deep within the Crystal Palace, Thoth-Amon is closely watching the adventurer's every action in the very heart of the jewel they've come to steal.

Tall, old, magically powerful, the figure of Thoth-Amon is an imposing one. He's also *ugly*, due to a convincing job by CONAN II's make-up man Gianetto De Rossi. "I tried to make Thoth-Amon more fantastic, more of a wizard by pretending that the whole right side of his face had been badly burned a long time ago," De Rossi says. "So every day I put a one-piece appliance, a different one every day, on that side of his face. I made the eye blind, made the beard longer, went higher with the eyebrow there. It took two and ■ half hours every day to do that."

The women of **Conan II: Grace Jones, Olivia D'Abo, Sarah Douglas.**

Even without wizards and Elite Guards, Conan and crew constantly find themselves occupied. Riding along a desert wasteland (actually Samalayucca) they pass by the huge (William Stout-designed) skeleton of a mastadon, a mute reminder of the prehistory still touching the Hyborean Age. Soon after, Conan rescues his old friend the wizard Akiro from fur-covered cannibals out to stake Akiro for a lunch. And then, with Akiro now a part of the group, Conan's band enters a small, filthy village, where they encounter the final—and most ferocious addition to their crew.

Drawn to the center of the village by a riotous commotion, Conan finds a large crowd jeering at a beautiful, black woman warrior. Despite the fact that her ankle is shackled to a heavy chain, the woman is vigorously defending herself against her attackers with a six-foot long staff. This is Zula, the fierce, deadly mercenary portrayed by Grace Jones.

Born in Spanishtown, Jamaica, on May 19, 1953, Grace and her family left that country for Syracuse, New York in 1960. After leaving Syracuse University, Jones began working as a model, traveling through Europe and appearing in a number of minor Italian films. But in 1977 she cut her first record—"I Need a Man"—and has since made five albums. Her one-woman disco/new wave shows have featured outrageous costumes (heavy on the leather and S & M outfits) as well as such feats as physically challenging or leaping out into her audiences; Jones has also interacted, on stage, with live tigers and leopards. Lately, she has achieved greater exposure through her bizarrre HONDA television commercials with co-star Adam Ant.

CONAN THE DESTROYER is Grace's first major film. Like her famous co-star, Jones is also an avid "strength athlete." "Grace is a fanatic body builder who," Schwarzenegger remembers, "the first time we met said 'C'mon, Arnold! Let's do some hacks!' Now nobody uses a word like hacks—which are half-squats—unless they're really familiar with that kind of language.

"And as Zula, Grace is fantastic, she is an animal," Schwarzenegger continues. "She moves well, she fights well, she's like a warrior from some time unknown. Grace *loves* being this character."

"Zula *is* ferocious," agrees Grace Jones. "She's a hired warrior who does the dirty jobs no one else wants. But she's loyal too. When Arnold saves her life she repays him by joining the quest."

Yet Zula's ferociousness spilled *off*-screen as well. "Even though I had about two weeks of training with the stick that's Zula's weapon, it was still heavy and hard to control," Jones recalls. "In fact, in my opening scene in the village I injured some stuntmen with it. They were padded up and they'd say 'Hit me here.' But I missed. It happened three times; one guy got a stick in the eye, another got it between the legs."

Schwarzenegger remembers Grace Jones' infamous "stick-hits" with a grin. "After awhile I didn't even stand close to Grace anymore," Arnold remembers. "She'd be on the set talking to Fleischer and bang *him* over the head right away. It was half that Grace is nuts and half that the stick was very long. And she always happened to reach somebody and hit somebody."

Jones agrees. "I didn't go to the wrap party because people were afraid of me," Grace concludes. "They would have said, 'Here comes Grace and her stick—move back!"

Impressed with Zula's fighting spirit (particularly when one-well-aimed blow breaks the nose of an attacker, resulting in a spray of blood), Conan cuts through Zula's chain and, with a cry of victory, she batters her way out of the village (which was filmed at Las Aguilas Rojas,

or the Red Eagles, a volcanic location on the outskirts of Mexico City previously used for such films as FROM EARTH TO THE MOON, TRIUMPHS OF A MAN CALLED HORSE, and DUNE. Aguilas Rojas is now utilized by the locals as a garbage dump).

It is not long before Zula has also joined the group, or long before Conan and his companions finally arrive at Thoth-Amon's Crystal Palace. The locations for this scene were set at an extinct volcano seventy miles west of Mexico City, at El Nevado De Toluca, whose crater holds a large black lake. The Crystal Palace Conan sees in the center of this lake, however, is a five foot high miniature by Emilio Ruiz, which was filmed on the back of Churubusco and later combined (through optical processes) with the actual location.

Riding to the shore of the lake, Conan discovers a boat that could take his companions to the Crystal Palace. But it is late; night approaches. Conan decides to camp on the shoreline and wait until morning for his assault on the Palace.

Thoth-Amon, however, has other plans. As the adventurers fall into a deep sleep, Thoth-Amon transforms himself into a giant Smoke Bird (an animated effect courtesy of Van Der Veer Photographic, which provided CONAN II's post-production special effects). Winging across the lake, the Smoke Bird quietly kidnaps Jehnna and takes her to the Palace; at dawn, Conan discovers the abduction and his group quickly rows to the castle. (Interestingly, the waters of El Nevado de Toluca were fed by *very* cold sources; accordingly, Vic Armstrong insisted that three scuba divers swim below the boat during the various takes so that if an actor inadvertently fell overboard the divers could quickly rescue the cast.)

But their way is blocked; Thoth-Amon has locked the front door. Using his powers of second sight, Akiro determines that another passage leads to the Palace's interior. After boating through Conan and friends arrive at the strange domain of Thoth-Amon. It is a frigid, unearthly place, studded with gigantic crystals (actually huge slabs of fiberglass); it is also a large set built within a Churubusco soundstage.

Another Churubusco stage held the narrow, cork-screwing staircase that leads up to the quarters of Thoth-Amon. Through a clever inter-action of full-scale set and a large hanging miniature of the staircase (hung in front of the camera during filming and appearing to be "attached" to the genuine set), the illusion of Conan creeping up a staircase hundreds of feet long was flawlessly accomplished.

But once inside the wizard's private rooms, Conan suddenly finds himself cut off from his companions and held a virtual prisoner in Thoth-Amon's deadly Mirror Chamber.

"The Mirror Chamber was one of the weirdest sets we ever had for a CONAN movie," Schwarzenegger says. "And it was a nightmare to light properly" adds Fleischer. That last comment is understandable, considering that the 40-foot diameter chamber was equipped with 18 full-size, two-way mirrors set up in a ring which could be raised, lowered or replaced with breakaway, polyfoam panels during Schwarzenegger's ensuing fight with Thoth-Amon. (Although at the climax of this battle Schwarzenegger destroys mirrors made of *real glass* in a stunt technique taught to him by Vic Armstrong.) When one considers that within each of the 18 mirrors was set another 21 smaller mirrors (at the top and bottom of the panels), the total number of reflections came to 378—enough to give any director or cinematographer a headache.

"The fight between Conan and Thoth-Amon was so complicated that it was also the only sequence in the entire movie that was storyboarded," Fleischer comments. "Complicated" is certainly the word for the hacking, slashing, and brutal hand-to-hand combat Conan must endure from Thoth-Amon. When Conan is whirled around at the hands of the wizard, Schwarzenegger is actually on a "wire rig," consisting of a harness underneath his loin cloth connected to piano wires leading up out of camera range. To add to the Cimmerian's troubles Thoth-Amon has again magically transformed himself, this time into a snarling red-caped Ape Man (a bit of appearance directly lifted from an original Howard story titled "Rogues In The House").

Although Arnold Schwarzenegger had (at least) the comfort of being able to fall on the soft gray foam rubber that lined the floor of the Mirror Chamber set, the actor portraying the Ape Man (Pat Roach, again) was not so lucky. Although he could hit that same soft floor, Roach was forced to wear an elaborate, uncomfortable make-up during the fight, one that took Gianetto De Rossi, each day, four hours to apply.

"We started by shaving all the hair off Pat's chest," De Rossi says. "It would have been terrible for Pat to have had to take that makeup off each night and pull his hair out with it too. Then we built up the Ape Man makeup on his naked upper torso every morning, piece by piece, with claws on the hand, a breast plate and arm appliances that I blended into his shoulders and arms with a reddish-black makeup base. I finished with a one piece mask for the head. But even though he's supposed to be an Ape Man, I didn't put any hair on him. I thought that with all the things like *King Kong* and *Planet of the Apes* around, the Ape Man would look stranger *without* hair. Now I think the Ape Man looks a little like Lothar from Mandrake the Magician; he's just this big, strange animal." Adding to Roach's discomfort during his makeup sessions was the fact that the Ape-mask made it difficult for him to breathe: therefore, while off-camera, a small block of wood was pushed in between the mask's jaws to hold them apart for an air passage, and small, green, round metal oxygen tanks with long attached hoses were always available for Roach to take a hit of air, as needed.

Finally, their fierce *mano a mano* combat near an end, Conan plunges his sword completely through the Ape Man's body. Which brings up another De Rossi specialty—wounds. "There are so many wounds in CONAN THE DESTROYER" De Rossi concludes, "that I use all kinds of different materials to make them with. Some are plastic and some are latex. And some of them, appropriately enough for a character like Conan, I build up very quickly with mortician's wax."

Clasping the Heart of Ahriman in his death throes, Thoth-Amon, now back in his human form, is instantly killed by the gem and turned into another bit of Van Der Veer optical trickery—a column of light. Then Conan and his companions barely make good their escape, the jewel safely in Jehnna's hands, while the Crystal Palace self-destructs in sympathy with the death of its late occupant.

Incredibly, Schwarzenegger not only performed all his own stunts during the Mirror Chamber fight but throughout the *entire film* as well. As CONAN THE DESTROYER's stunt coordinator, Vic Armstrong, comments "Besides being very strong, Arnold's very agile and quick to learn. That fight with Thoth-Amon was pretty brutal—but neither Schwarzenegger or Roach needed stand-ins during it."

Vic Armstrong's original dream was to be a horseracing jockey, "but I just kept growing." Instead, Armstrong entered the world of films and stuntwork by doubling for Gregory Peck during a horseback riding scene in the 1966 film ARABESQUE; Armstrong was only 17 years old. Many years and many films later Armstrong found himself in Mexico City supervising the stunts for CONAN II. "Kiyoshi Yamazaki and I set up a gym in the El Presidente Hotel in the Zona Rosa section of Mexico," Armstrong explains, "and then we'd get the CONAN II cast in there every night and go over the next day's work with them. Yamazaki knows a lot of very beautiful, stylistic maneuvers that he taught the cast. Then I'd combine that with a lot of straight filmfighting techniques. These traditional film fights are quite different from real violence; it's all a matter of angles and camera placement. Someone can look like they're being hit by a sword on screen when, in reality, the sword is passing harmlessly in the air a foot in front of them."

Gianetto De Rossi *makes up ape-man* **Pat Roach.**

"Vic and I always discussed the general feeling of what we wanted a CONAN fight to be" says CONAN THE DESTROYER director Richard Fleischer. "We tried to block it out like a little three-act play. Then Vic would go off, develop a routine, give that to me for approval and finally go back with whatever adjustments I'd suggested and start working with the actors to rehearse the action. Then we'd shoot each fight a piece at a time. If I didn't think it right, we'd change it to something else—we were always flexible. But I have to say Vic Armstrong is the best stunt coordinator I've ever worked with. By far. He's terrific."

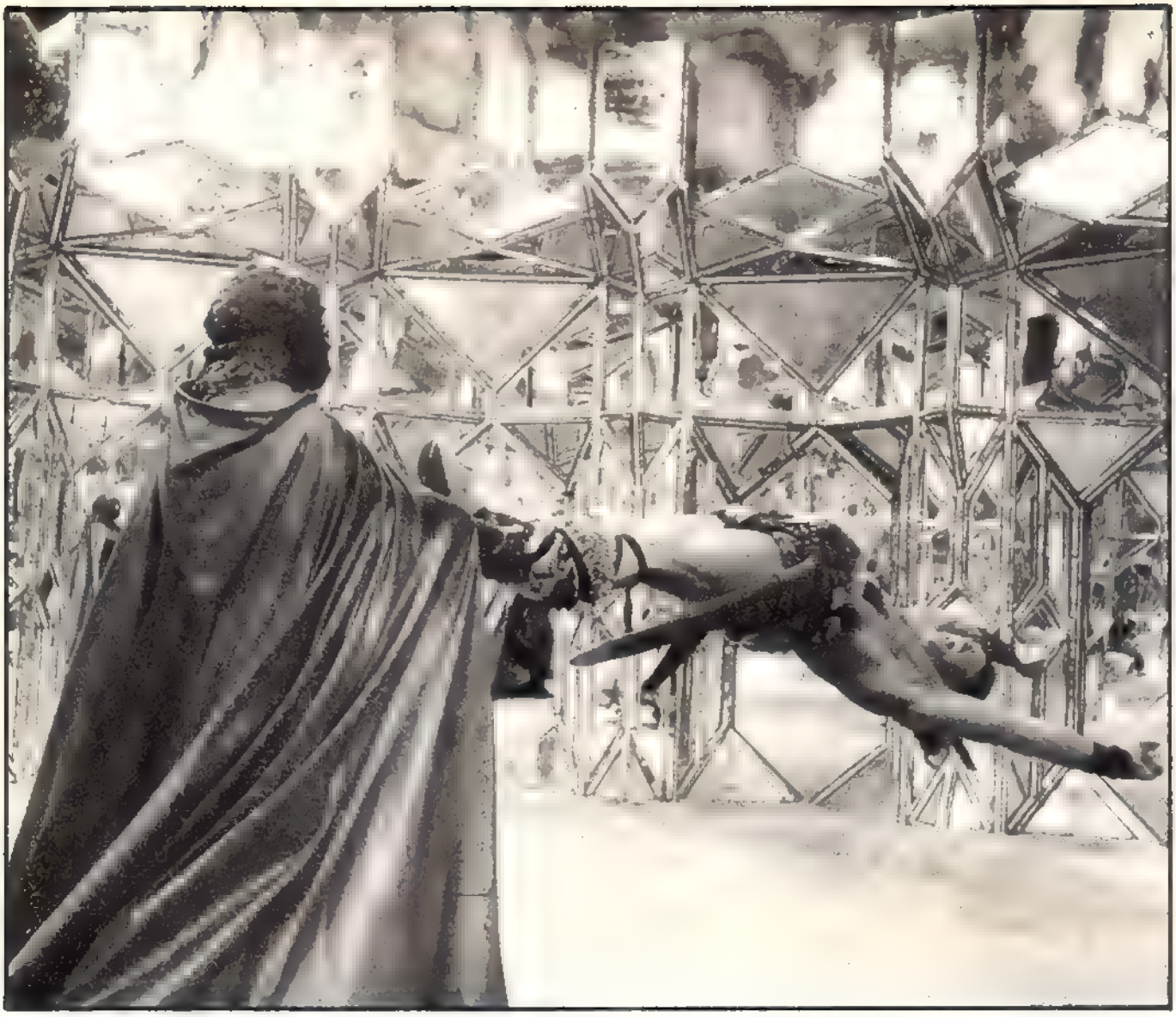
Part of Armstrong's good reputation may stem from his professional attitude, as this following comment attests. "I'm a great believer in having fight routines flow freely and naturally, so it's very important to get all that practice in offstage. Even more importantly, my prime concern is safety. I'm a great believer in the idea that you can always do it again. There's no sense in risking life and limb if you can avoid it in any possible way. I hate to tempt fate—touch wood—but except for a couple of people being bashed with a stick, and a few other minor incidents, nothing serious has happened on CONAN II. And I intend to keep that way."

Safely away from the Crystal Palace, Conan and his companions barely have time to bind their wounds before they are once again beset by danger—this time a vicious attack by the Queen's Elite Guards. Their leader Togra (Sven-Ole Thorsen) immediately squares off with Conan and another vicious hand to hand fight scene—this time on horse—ensues. "I did a lot of my sword training on horseback," Schwarzenegger reveals, "because in the CONAN II script it very rarely says that Conan steps on a horse. He *jumps* on it." Wilt Chamberlain agrees. "We did some extensive horse training on this film," says Wilt. "We had to ride up and down some pretty steep hills at a fast clip, we had some fight scenes and other stunts on horseback. But I think that most of us pulled it off fairly well."

"All of the cast did well when I trained them with the horses," Vic Armstrong adds. "We rented this bull ring and stables about 30 minutes from the studio and set up a program where all the actors had a certain amount of riding to do. They came down as often as they could and just rode and rode and rode as many different horses as they could. The actors took to riding so much that they even began riding, just for pleasure, on their day off, which was a Sunday. And it was just incredible looking at a man of Arnold's bulk riding around; he turned out to be a natural rider. I'm not exaggerating: Arnold was good."

Although their battle begins on horseback, Conan and Togra soon fall to the ground (a shot that had to be done ten times before Fleischer was satisfied) and continue their combat on foot. In actuality, Sven-Ole Thorsen, was impaled by Conan in an elaborate booby trap at the climax of CONAN THE DESTROYER. It was during Togra's CONAN II fight with Schwarzenegger, however, that another CONAN THE DESTROYER accident took place.

Originally trained as an engineer, Sven-Ole Thorsen is a 3rd *dan* black belt in Karate, a successful businessman, a world-title power lifter (who has picked up over 1000 Kilos dead weight) and a frequent European contender for the Year's Strongest Man title (some Thorsen accomplishments: blowing up a hot water bottle until it bursts, holding a chain in either arm attached to two airplanes and preventing them from taking off; pulling three trains—at the same



No, it's not a scene from **'Flashdance'**, *it's Conan in the clutches of the ape man.*

time—weighing 54 tons. Weighing 300 pounds for his role as Thorgrim in CONAN THE BARBARIAN, down to 270 for Togra in CONAN THE DESTROYER, Sven-Ole explains how he very nearly turned Arnold Schwarzenegger into a southpaw.

"We didn't have the kind of accidents on CONAN II as we did on Conan I, where Sandahl Bergman had her finger laid open to the bone by a sword hit," Thorsen states, "But we came close. For example, when Arnold and I had our fight, I was wearing this face plate so people wouldn't recognize me from the first movie; I grew a beard, too. But the plate kept slipping down over my eyes at the worse moments, and one of those was during our sword fight. The plate went down, Arnold's arm went up, and because I couldn't see too well I missed and chopped the meat off the side of one of Conan's fingers."

"Sven hit my hand pretty good," Schwarzenegger corroborates, "and there were some bad falls on this movie. But since CONAN THE DESTROYER has about 10 times more killing than the first movie, I guess we got off lightly."

With the Cimmerian ultimately victorious over Togra, the barbarian thief still has further adventures in store. Ahead lies, a comical scene where a drunken Conan reveals his true thoughts about Valeria; a violent and mystical encounter in the Jade Temple (home of the Golden Horn) and its crypt (the crypt scenes were filmed in an actual, abandoned silver mine located in the mountainous regions of Mexico's El Chico); a dangerous descent down an enormous waterfall pouring over a formation of hexagonal columns of white basalt rocks (in the Pachuca area). Yet eventually the adventurous band finally returns to Shadizar.

But the group has been betrayed by Bombatta, who has taken Jehnna and the Golden Horn back to Queen Taramis. Conan barely arrives in time to stop the sacrifice of Jehnna to The Dreaming God, a pagan rite held in Taramis' courtyard (actually a set built inside Stage 7 on the Churubusco lot). Before he can halt the blade meant for the Princess' throat, though, Conan must first engage in a duel to the death with Bombatta himself.

Slugging their way across the courtyard, Schwarzenegger and Chamberlain again eschewed stand-ins and acted out the vicious fight themselves—much to Conan's chagrin. "I hurt my leg a little during the fight," Arnold recounts, "but that was nothing compared to what Wilt was doing to me. He just went crazy. First he leaped off this ten-foot high column on me and then he was so into beating me up that I finally had to yell, 'Wilt, please! The cam-

Director **Fleischer** *shows* **Jehnna** how to place the **Golden Horn.**

era doesn't know if you're really biting my ear! Stop it! Just pretend!'"

But even with *Bombatta* eventually dead Conan's troubles are still not over. For the Golden Horn has been inserted into the Dreaming God's forehead. Instead of a handsome deity it is Dagoth—a winged, clawed, six-and-a-half foot creature from hell—that springs to life, bringing with it earthquakes and titanic windstorms.

Designed and constructed by Carlo Rambaldi, the man who built E.T., Pat Roach (who was inside the Dagoth suit, making him the only actor to appear—and be killed in—three roles in a CONAN film) playfully dubbed Rambaldi's creation "D.T." Dagoth was not your typical Roach-in-a-monster-suit creation, however; it was a complicated engineering construct as well.

Like most of Rambaldi's creations Dagoth was operated off-camera by a small crew of controllers pushing and pulling on long aluminum handles,

The Dreaming God *begins its terrible transformation.*

onto which were attached thin braided cables of the kind found on bicycle brakes. These cables in turn ran along the stage floor out of camera sight and into the base of the foamrubber Dagoth, near the monster's tail. The cables inside Dagoth terminated in thick pieces of plastic, bellows mechanisms and jointed aluminum rods. With Pat Roach inside the costume to provide the larger movements, the off-camera cable operators could, with a twist of the wrist, make Dagoth breathe, blink, and twitch his tail.

Having wrestled both a full-scale giant snake in CONAN I and now a winged demon in CONAN II, how does Schwarzenegger feel about such special effects creatures? "You have to study them very carefully," says Arnold, "because you have to be aware of their mechanical shortcomings. For instance the giant snake in the first film couldn't wrap its tail around my body to strangle me; I had to wrap it around and hold it

Conan *defends* **Jehnna** *in the final confrontation with* **Dagoth.**

on myself while at the same time trying to look as if I were pushing it away.

"The same thing goes for Dagoth. In some shots, although I seem to be fighting him, I'm actually moving his head around like a puppet's, to make it look like he's trying to shake me off his back."

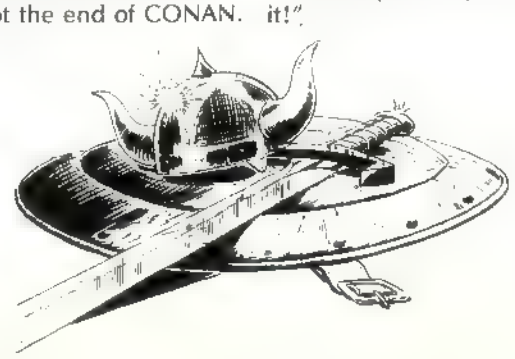
For the moment where Dagoth grabs both of Conan's arms and lifts him up off the ground to rip him apart Schwarzenegger was actually standing on an out-of-camera range counterweighted teeter-totter, which made him appear to be "floating." Dagoth's flying scene was done on-stage with wires; the knife flying into the monster's eye (packed with "bloodbags") was actually guided down a thin wire after being fired from a slingshot. Comically, it took more than one take to correctly get this shot. On the first attempt, the slingshot operator was off-target and the knife buried itself in Dagoth's nose.

Ultimately, amidst an on-stage, off-camera, giant fan-produced storm (aided by more Van Der Veer opticals), Conan manages to pull the Golden Horn from its socket and Dagoth is vanquished. A grateful Jehnna offers Conan a chance to rule by her side (Taramis being killed by Dagoth during the foregoing battle). But the barbarian glowers and reminds the Princess of a prophecy first uttered in CONAN THE BARBARIAN: "I'll be a king someday—but by my *own* hand."

And thus ends the second celluloid adventure of the barbarian from Cimmeria. But it's not the end of CONAN. CONAN II is almost a certainty and may, in fact, feature a plot pitting the rough-hewn talents of the Cimmerian against a band of cutthroat pirates.

Such speculation, however, lies with the future. For the present, CONAN THE DESTROYER seems to offer the ultimate in die-hard Howardian excitement. But perhaps Conan himself puts it best. When asked what's the bottom line of CONAN II, Schwarzenegger smiles and enthusiastically says:

"It's simple. People are going to *enjoy* it!"



THE DESTROYER

PART II

Adapted by
MICHAEL FLEISHER

Breakdowns by
JOHN BUSCEMA

Finishes by
PAT REDDING
BOB CAMP
CHARLES VESS

Lettered by
RICHARD PARKER

Colored by
GEORGE ROUSSOS

Edited by
LARRY HAMA

Supervised by
JIM SHOOTER

CONAN
CROM!

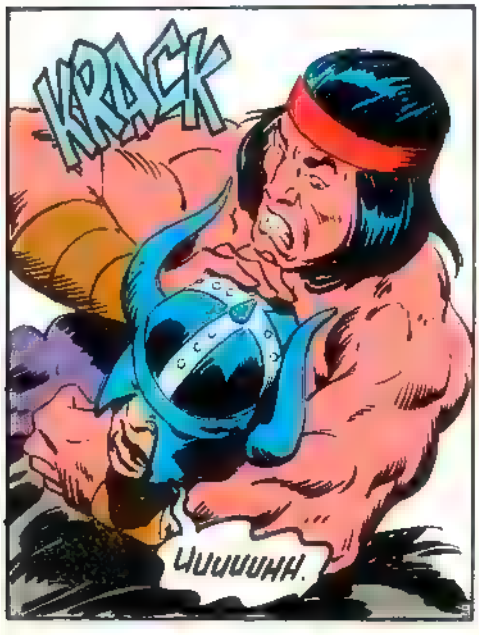
SOON...
WHAT IS IT, CIMMERIAN, THAT HAS SUDDENLY MADE YOU TENSE IN YOUR SADDLE LIKE A JUNGLE CAT?
THEY'RE CLOSE ENOUGH NOW, ZULA, THAT YOU CAN PROBABLY MAKE THEM OUT FOR YOURSELF!
" RIDERS! FOUR OF THEM!"
REMEMBER! IT IS I WHO'LL GRAB THE GIRL! AND THE GEM!
AYE, TOGRA!
WHY, THEY-- THEY MEAN TO ATTACK US!
A MAN WHO SEES THE FUTURE AS WELL AS YOU DO, BOMBAATA, OUGHT TO BE A NECROMANCER BY TRADE!
TO THE LAST MAN! SLAY THEM!
I'VE GOT THE GIRL!
NO!
BARBARIAN! HELP ME!
CURSE IT, WENCH! WILL YOU STOP SQUIRMING--

--OR AM I GOING TO HAVE TO--
BLAST! VERY WELL, THEN, YOU LOWBORN MONGREL DOG!
OOHHHH!

IF IT'S THE TASTE OF COLD STEEL YOU'RE AFTER--

--IT'S COLD STE--
UNNNGHH!

NO! PLEASE! MY--MY NECK! LET (GASP) GO OF MY--


KRACK
UUUUUHH.

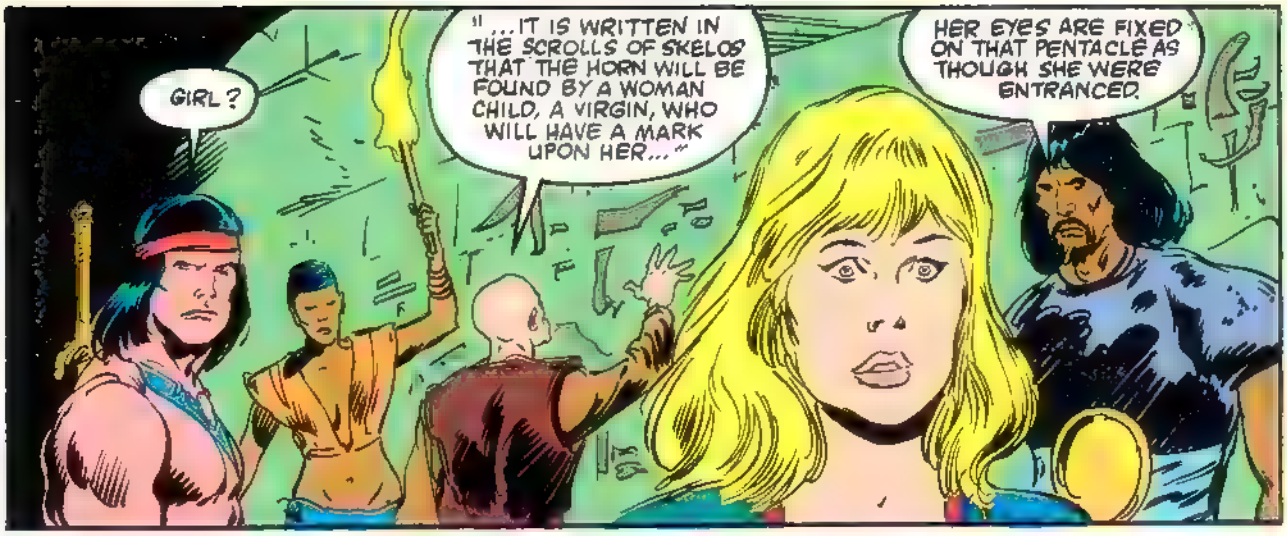
WE'VE--THAT IS, YOUR FRIENDS--HAVE DISPATCHED THE OTHERS, BARBARIAN. HOW FARE YOU?
THEY WERE THE QUEEN'S ELITE GUARD BOMBAATA. WHY DID THEY ATTACK US?

NOT BY HER ORDERS, YOU CAN BE SURE! I'LL WAGER THEY WANTED THE HEART OF AHRIMAN FOR THEMSELVES, AND THE GIRL WITH IT.
THAT NIGHT...
TAKE THIS HEALING POTION, MALAK. USE IT TO SALVE THE WOUNDS OF YOURSELF AND THE OTHERS.
AFTER WE RETURN TO SHADIZAR, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
FIND MY KINGDOM, AND A QUEEN TO SIT BESIDE ME.
AND JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, FRIEND?
WHY, UH, GENTLY MASSAGING YOUR WOUND WITH AKIRO'S HEALING POTION.
WE WOULDN'T :AHEM: WANT AN INFECTION TO SPREAD, WOULD WE?
I'LL SPREAD YOUR HEAD OPEN FOR YOU IF YOU DON'T WATCH OUT!
WHAT KINGDOM ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? AND WHAT QUEEN?
THE KINGDOM I WAS PROMISED. AND THE QUEEN-- VALERIA, A GREAT WOMAN AND A GREAT WARRIOR.
COULD THERE EVER BE ANY-ONE FOR YOU BUT HER?
ANOTHER QUEEN? NOT ON YOUR LIFE.
I MEAN ANOTHER WOMAN AFTER ALL--
--THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WOMAN IN--
I WARNED YOU, BARBARIAN, DIDN'T I?

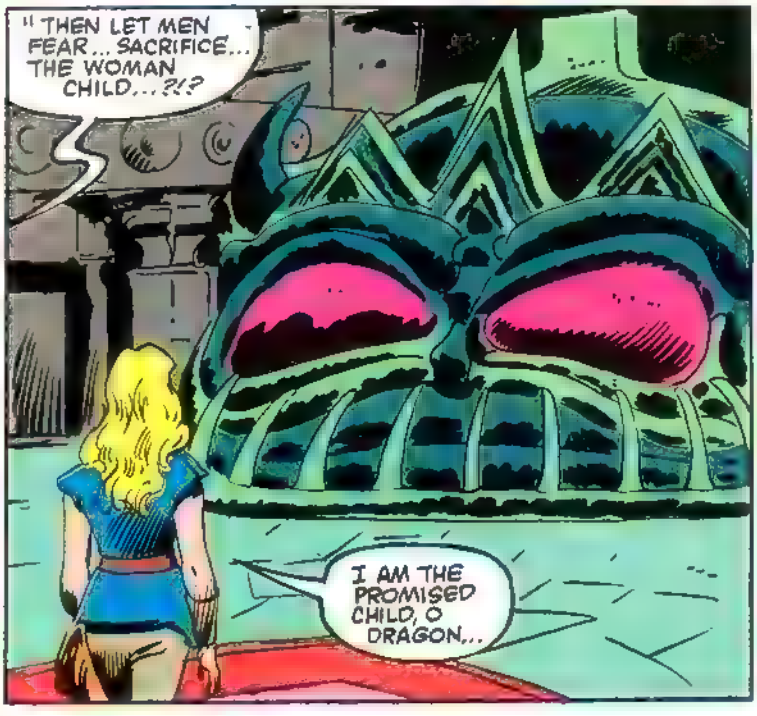
I WARNED YOU NOT TO TOUCH HER!
HE'S NOT TOUCHING ME, BOMBAATA! I'M TOUCHING HIM! NOW GO AWAY!
MEANTIME, BACK IN SHADIZAR, IN THE OPULENT COURTYARD OF QUEEN TARAMIS'S ROYAL PALACE...
O MIGHTY DAGOTH, LONG HAVE I LIVED AND PRAYED FOR THE DAY OF YOUR AWAKENING-- FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU WILL RISE FROM YOUR CENTURIES OF SLEEP AND RULE THE KINGDOM OF SHADIZAR WITH ME.
I HAVE LIVED FOR THAT DAY, MY DREAMING GOD, AND IT IS NIGH.
I ANNOINT YOU WITH THESE HOLY URGENTS, AND SOON--
--SOON, DAGOTH, I WILL GIVE YOU LIFE. AND FOR THAT YOU WILL GIVE ME GREATNESS.
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
AND IS THIS WHERE THE TREASURE'S HID, THEN, GIRL? INSIDE THE BOWELS OF THIS JADE TEMPLE CARVED OUT OF THE SIDE OF THIS MAMMOTH CLIFF?
I DON'T KNOW THAT YET, CONAN. I KNOW ONLY THAT I MUST GO WHERE I FEEL MYSELF LED.

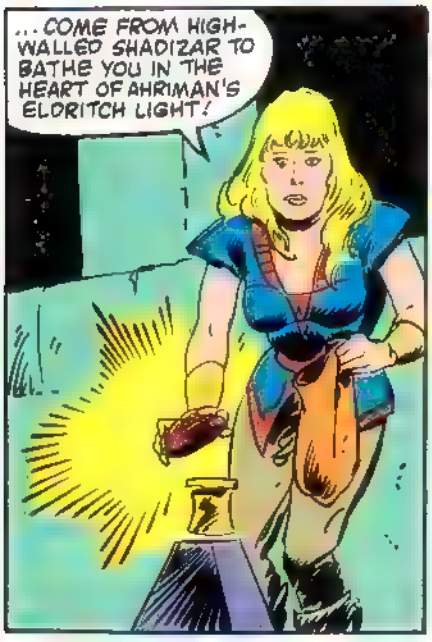
WELL, NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, GIRL, WE MAY AS WELL LOOK INSIDE.
BY THE GODS! LOOK AT HIM! THE BARBARIAN MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH OF TEN CIVILIZED MEN!
AYE. SLOWLY BUT SURELY, IT'S GIVEN WAY.
BUT WE'LL STILL NEED LIGHT.
HERE, THEN. USE THIS.
GASP! LOOK! AKIRO IS A WIZARD! HE MERELY POINTED, AND BURST INTO FLAME!
SHOULDN'T ONE OF US GO BACK, AND, UH, STAND GUARD?
LOOK. THERE IN THE TORCHLIGHT.

THAT DOOR'S IRON, MY FRIEND. IT WON'T LIFT EASILY.
IT'S NO USE. HE CAN'T BUDGE IT.
CROM'S UNNNG TEETH!
NO, YOU'RE WRONG, BOMBAATA! SEE?
AH! HEAR THAT CLICK? THIS KNOB ACTIVATES SOME HIDDEN MECHANISM THAT SERVES TO HOLD THE DOOR IN PLACE.
CAN YOU COMPREHEND THESE SYMBOLS, WIZARD?
YES, I CAN. LISTEN. THEY TELL THE LEGEND OF THE GOD DAGOTH.
"...THEN TOOK PLACE A GREAT BATTLE BETWEEN THE GODS, AND IN THIS BATTLE DAGOTH WAS DISARMED OF HIS HORN. AND THUS WEAKENED, HE WAS FLUNG TO EARTH, AND HIS HORN AFTER HIM.
"INTO THE PRIMEVAL SLIME HE SANK, AND FOR A THOUSAND YEARS HE LAY IN DEATH, AND HIS BODY TURNED TO STONE, AND THE STONE TURNED TO MARBLE. BUT HIS HORN HAD FALLEN IN ANOTHER PLACE...


GIRL?
"...IT IS WRITTEN IN THE SCROLLS OF SKELOS THAT THE HORN WILL BE FOUND BY A WOMAN CHILD, A VIRGIN, WHO WILL HAVE A MARK UPON HER..."
HER EYES ARE FIXED ON THAT PENTACLE AS THOUGH SHE WERE ENTRANCED.

"...AND WHEN THE HORN IS PLACED ONCE MORE INTO THE FOREHEAD OF THE DREAMING GOD, DAGOTH WILL ARISE."
FIENDS TAKE YOU, WIZARD! LOWER YOUR VOICE! CAN'T YOU SEE THE GIRL'S BEGUN TO PRAY?

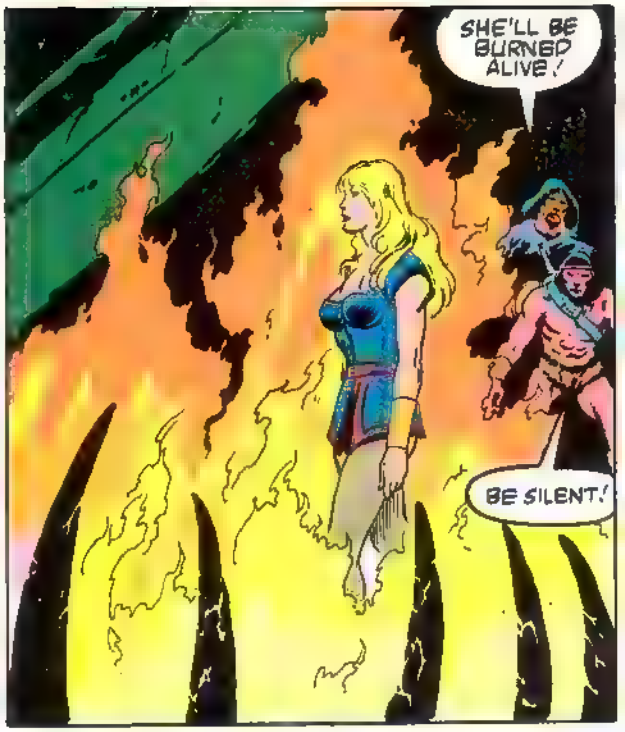

"THEN LET MEN FEAR... SACRIFICE... THE WOMAN CHILD...?!?
I AM THE PROMISED CHILD, O DRAGON...

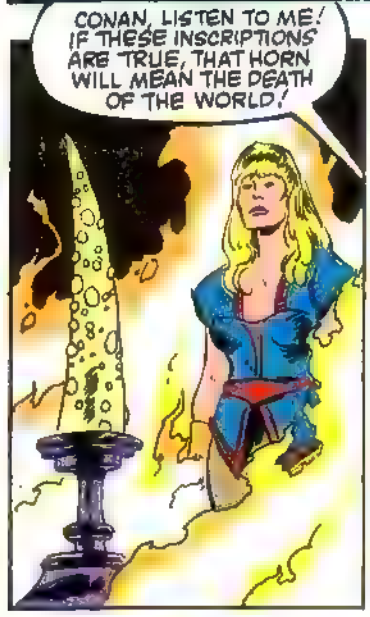

...COME FROM HIGH-WALLED SHADIZAR TO BATHE YOU IN THE HEART OF AHRIMAN'S ELDRITCH LIGHT!

CIMMERIAN! STOP HER! SHE MUST NOT--

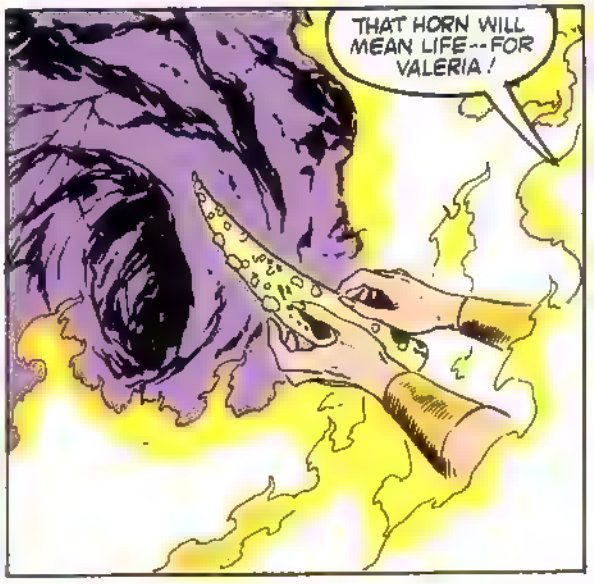
BY THE GODS! THE IRON MAW OF THE DRAGON! LOOK AT IT!
IT'S BEGUN TO OPEN!

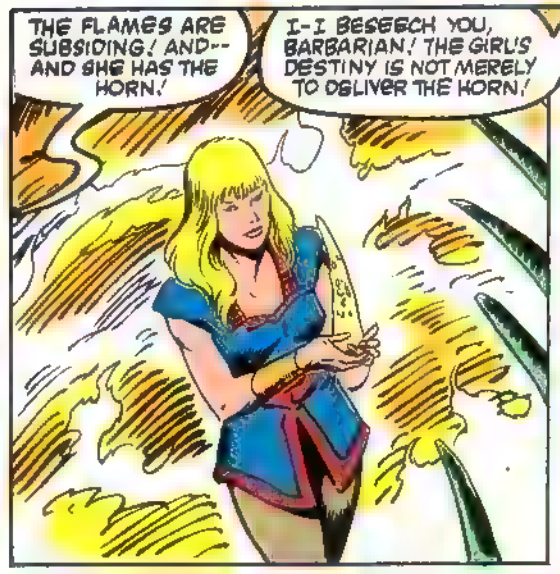
IT'S BREATHING FIRE! IT'S ALIVE!


SHE'LL BE BURNED ALIVE!
BE SILENT!


CONAN, LISTEN TO ME! IF THESE INSCRIPTIONS ARE TRUE, THAT HORN WILL MEAN THE DEATH OF THE WORLD!

NAY, AKIRO!

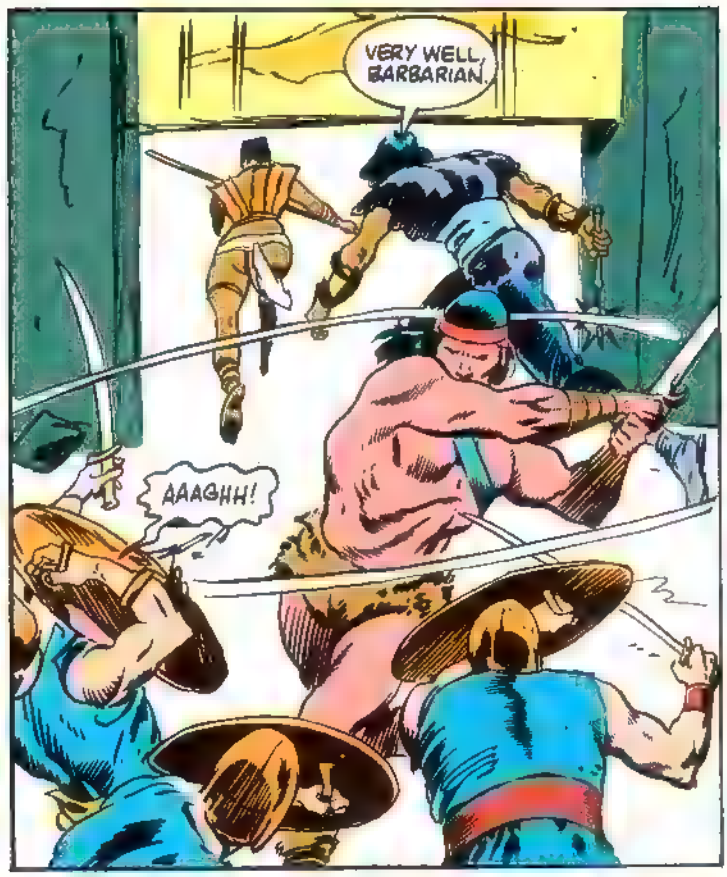

THAT HORN WILL MEAN LIFE--FOR VALERIA!

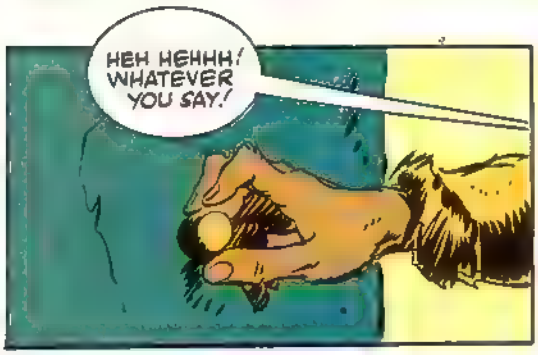

THE FLAMES ARE SUBSIDING! AND-- AND SHE HAS THE HORN!
I-I BESEECH YOU, BARBARIAN! THE GIRL'S DESTINY IS NOT MERELY TO DELIVER THE HORN!

SHE IS TO BE KILLED, CONAN! KILLED!
WHETHER THAT IS HER TRUE DESTINY, AKIRO, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

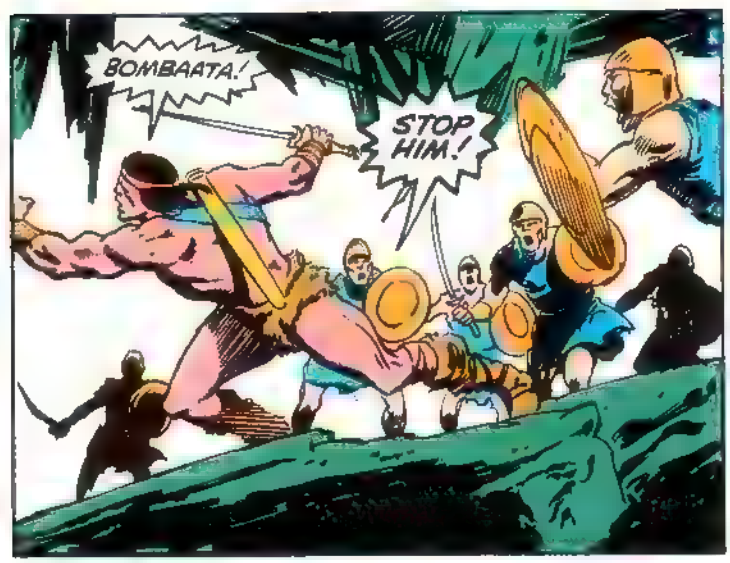
ALSO, THE INSCRIPTIONS SPEAK OF THE KEEPERS OF THE HORN, WHO--
WE ARE THE KEEPERS OF THE HORN, WHO--
OUT!
UH-OH! WARRIORS, BARBARIAN! A SCORE OF THEM, MAYHAP EVEN MORE!
WE COME IN PEACE.
THEN LET US DEPART IN PEACE.
LET THE GIRL COME FORWARD. WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR HER ALL OUR LIVES. WE ARE THE KEEPERS OF THE HORN. IT BELONGS TO US.
THEN YOU KNOW THE LEGEND. YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE HORN IS PLACED BACK IN THE FOREHEAD OF DAGOTH.
THE GOD WILL LIVE AGAIN. AND WE, WHO GAVE HIM LIFE, WILL STAND BY HIS RIGHT HAND AND RULE THE WORLD WITH HIM.

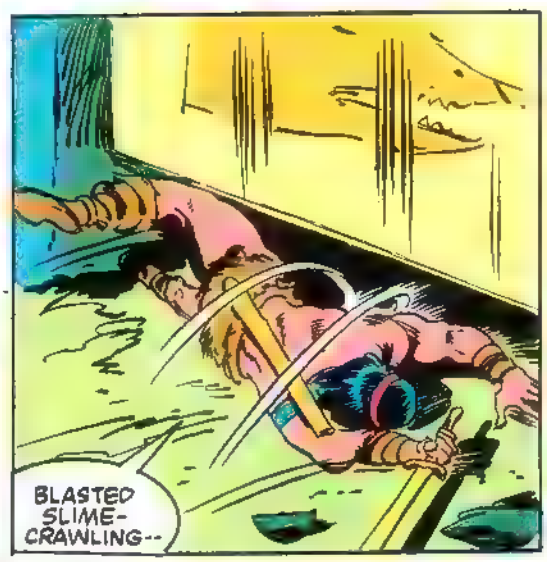
YOU WILL DIE IN THE GREAT EVIL THAT WILL COME FROM HIS BIRTH!
WE WILL CONTROL HIM!
NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL HIM. HIS POWER AND HIS EVIL ARE TOO GREAT.
GIVE US THE GIRL, OR WE WILL TAKE HER!
HERE'S WHAT WE'LL GIVE YOU, DOG!
MALAK! AKIRO!
GNNGH!
TAKE THE GIRL BACK INTO THE CRYPT.
QUICKLY, CHILD! WE MUST DO AS THE BARBARIAN BIDS US!
UNNGHH!
GHAAA!
ZULA! BOMBAATA! YOU FOLLOW THE OTHERS, WHILE I HOLD THESE JACKAL-SPAWN AT BAY!

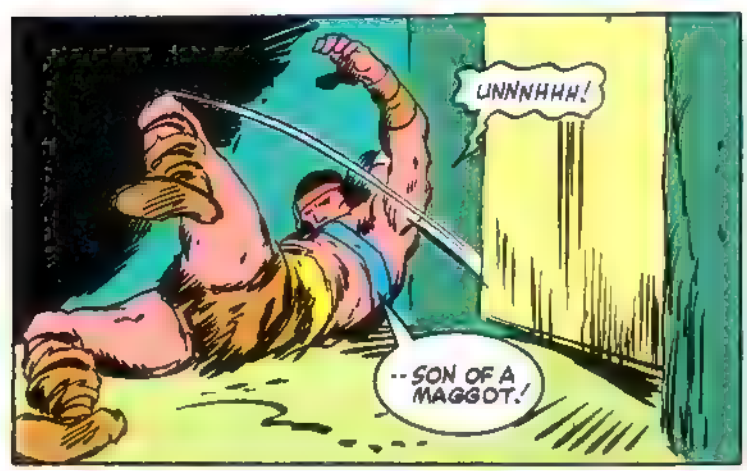

VERY WELL, BARBARIAN.
AAAGHH!

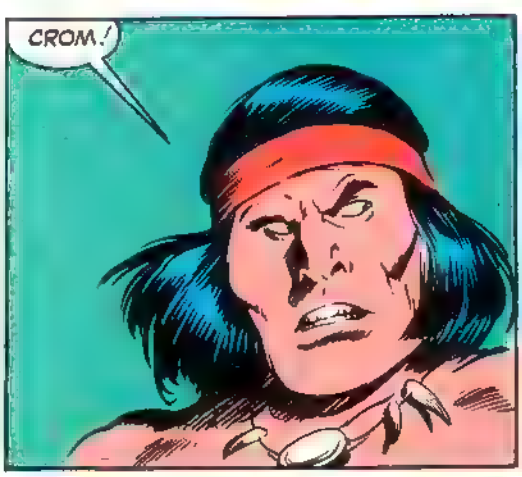

HEH HEHHH! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

EH--?!


BOMBAATA!
STOP HIM!

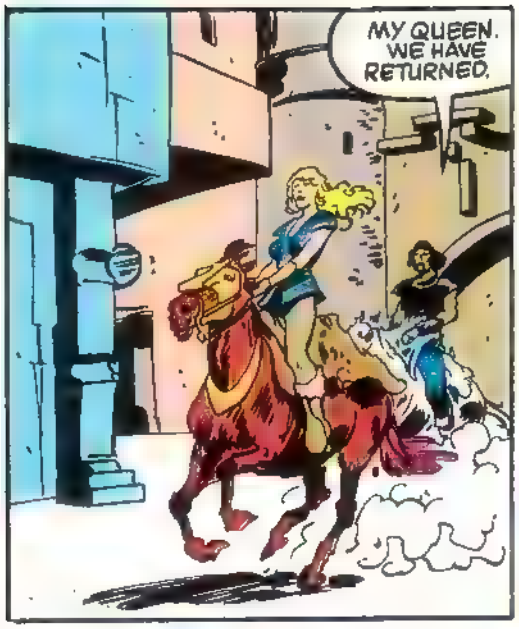

BLASTED SLIME-CRAWLING--

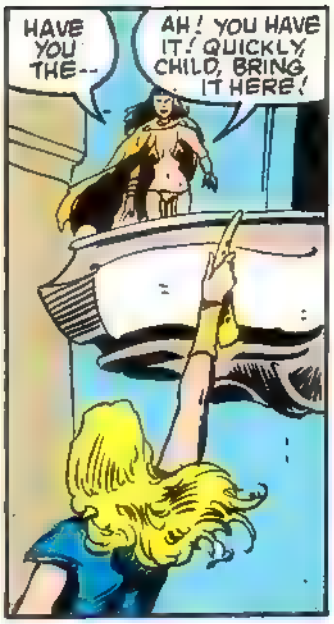

UNNNHHH!
--SON OF A MAGGOT!


CROM!

HURRY, BLAST IT! BEND YOUR BACKS! THE BARBARIAN AND HIS COHORTS MUST NOT ESCAPE US!
BEHIND THE DRAGON, THERE'S A TUNNEL! I-I SAW IT!
LEAD THE WAY, GIRL! BUT DON'T FORGET THE JEWEL!
I HAVE IT!
HURRY! THE DRAGON'S MOUTH--IT'S CLOSING!
AND THOSE WARRIORS WILL BE ON US IN SECONDS! COME ON, GIRL! MOVE!
CIMMERIAN!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, WOMAN! I'M RIGHT--
--BEHIND YOU!
GONE!

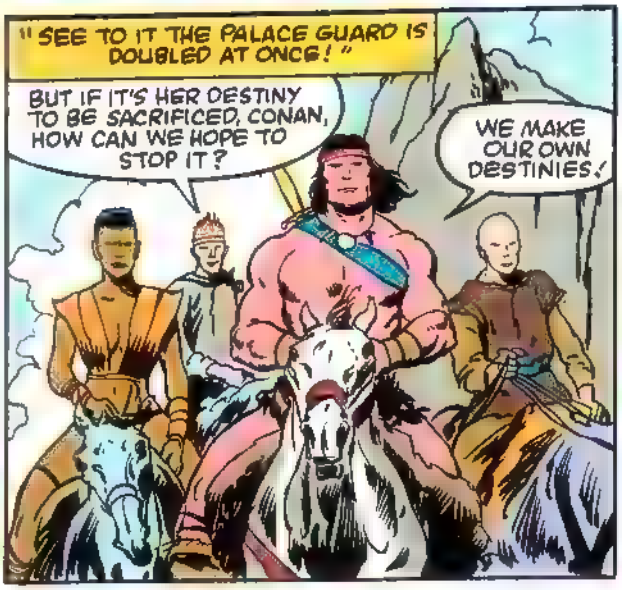
CURSE IT, JEHNNA! WILL YOU HURRY!
BUT--BUT CONAN! THE OTHERS!
WHERE ARE THEY?
THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US! NOW MOUNT YOUR STEED--
--AND MOVE!
THE DESTINY OF TARAMIS AND SHADIZAR DEPEND ON US!
WITHIN MOMENTS...
THEY'RE GONE!
TARAMIS PLANNED THIS FROM THE BEGINNING! WE'D GET THE HORN, HER GUARDS WOULD KILL US, BOMBAATA WOULD TAKE THE GIRL BACK TO HER!
THEN HER PROMISE TO YOU! IT WAS A LIE!
SHADIZAR!
CONAN! WHERE ARE WE GOING?
SOMETIME LATER...
SOON, DAGOTH, VERY SOON, THE HOUR OF YOUR EVERLASTING GLORY WILL BE UPON US!

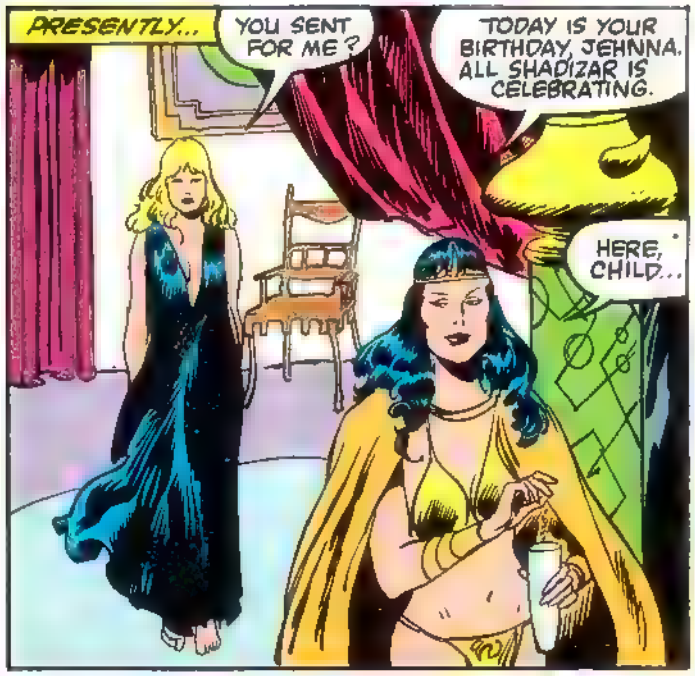

MY QUEEN. WE HAVE RETURNED.


HAVE YOU THE--
AH! YOU HAVE IT! QUICKLY, CHILD, BRING IT HERE!

NOW-- PREPARE HER!
AS YOU COMMAND, O QUEEN!

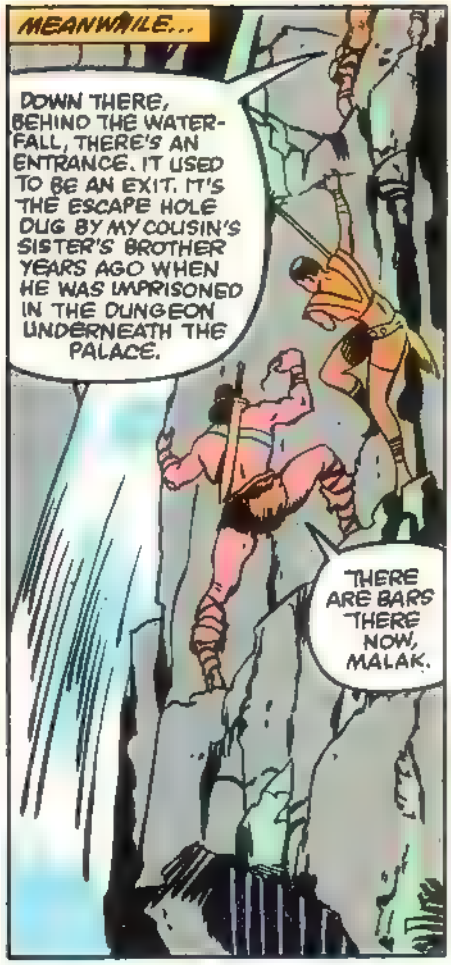
WHERE ARE MY SOLDIERS?
DEAD.
THEN CONAN LIVES?
HE LIVES.
VERY WELL, THEN...


"SEE TO IT THE PALACE GUARD IS DOUBLED AT ONCE!"
BUT IF IT'S HER DESTINY TO BE SACRIFICED, CONAN, HOW CAN WE HOPE TO STOP IT?
WE MAKE OUR OWN DESTINIES!


PRESENTLY...
YOU SENT FOR ME?
TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY, JEHNNA. ALL SHADIZAR IS CELEBRATING.
HERE, CHILD...

...DRINK!

FOR DAGOTH. TO LIFE.
FOR DAGOTH.
SHE IS READY.
WHILE OUTSIDE THE CITY...
RESERVES SUMMONED FORTH TO GUARD THE PALACE!
THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS ALL AROUND IT! WE COULD NEVER GET IN! BUT AT LEAST YOU CAN'T SAY WE, ER, DIDN'T TRY!
THE FRONT GATE CAN'T BE THE ONLY WAY.
IT ISN'T. WHY DON'T I, UH, TELL YOU ABOUT IT?
THEN YOU CAN GO THERE YOURSELF!
DON'T TELL US ABOUT IT, MALAK!
"SHOW US!"
MAY ALMIGHTY DAGOTH BE PRAISED!
THE ENDLESS MILLENIA OF GLORY AND SALVATION ARE NIGH UPON US!
ENDLESS MILLENIA OF... GLORY ARE NIGH...UPON US...!

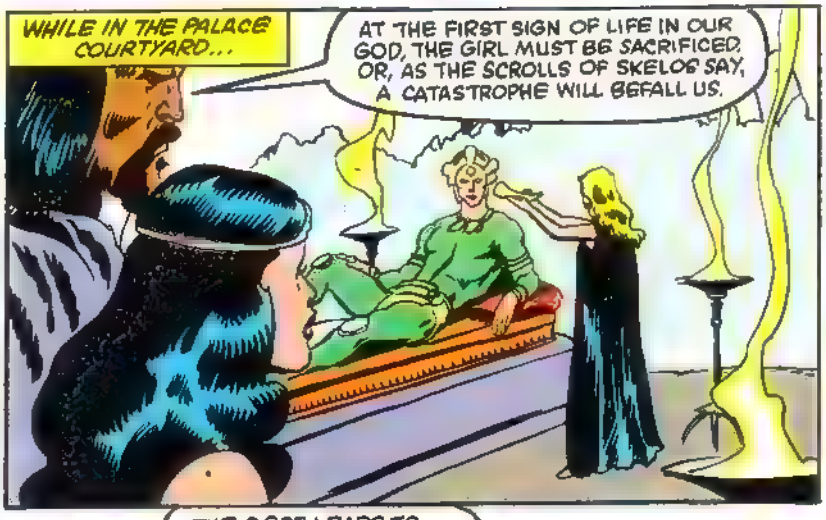

MEANWHILE...
DOWN THERE, BEHIND THE WATER-FALL, THERE'S AN ENTRANCE. IT USED TO BE AN EXIT. IT'S THE ESCAPE HOLE DUG BY MY COUSIN'S SISTER'S BROTHER YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS IMPRISONED IN THE DUNGEON UNDERNEATH THE PALACE.
THERE ARE BARS THERE NOW, MALAK.

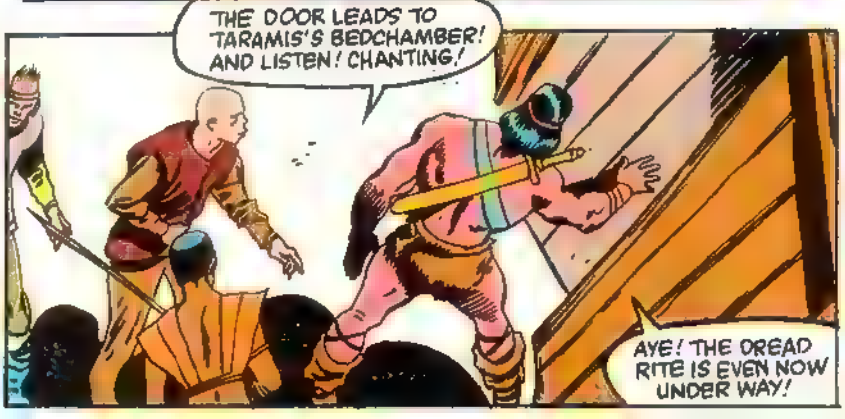
BUT I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THEM--

--BY (UNNGHH) CROM!

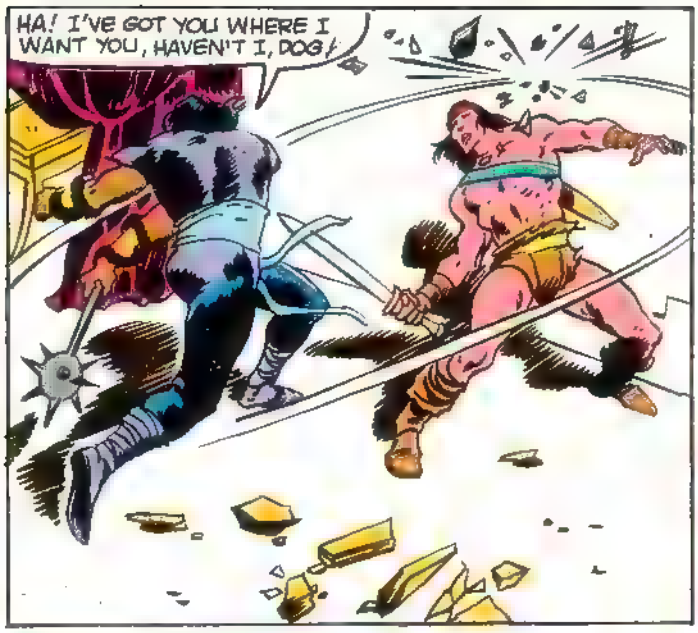
THE BARS MUST HAVE BEEN PUT UP AFTER YOUR SISTER'S BROTHER'S COUSIN ESCAPED.
MY COUSIN'S SISTER'S BROTHER!

SILENCE, BOTH OF YOU! WHO CARES WHOSE BROTHER OR COUSIN'S SISTER'S BROTHER IT WAS?


WHILE IN THE PALACE COURTYARD...
AT THE FIRST SIGN OF LIFE IN OUR GOD, THE GIRL MUST BE SACRIFICED. OR, AS THE SCROLLS OF SKELOS SAY, A CATASTROPHE WILL BEFALL US.


THE DOOR LEADS TO TARAMIS'S BEDCHAMBER! AND LISTEN! CHANTING!
AYE! THE DREAD RITE IS EVEN NOW UNDER WAY!

DAGOTH'S EYELIDS! I-I SAW THEM FLUTTERING!
NOW, GRAND VIZIER! KILL HER!
YOU!!
YOU'VE ARRIVED TOO LATE TO HALT THE RITE, BARBARIAN CUR!
BUT JUST IN TIME TO MEET YOUR DOOM!
ZULA! MALAK!
THE GIRL!
NO!
WE'RE TOO LATE! WE'LL NEVER GET DOWN THERE IN TIME TO STOP HIM!
CEASE YOUR WHINING, LITTLE THIEF!
AAAGGHH!

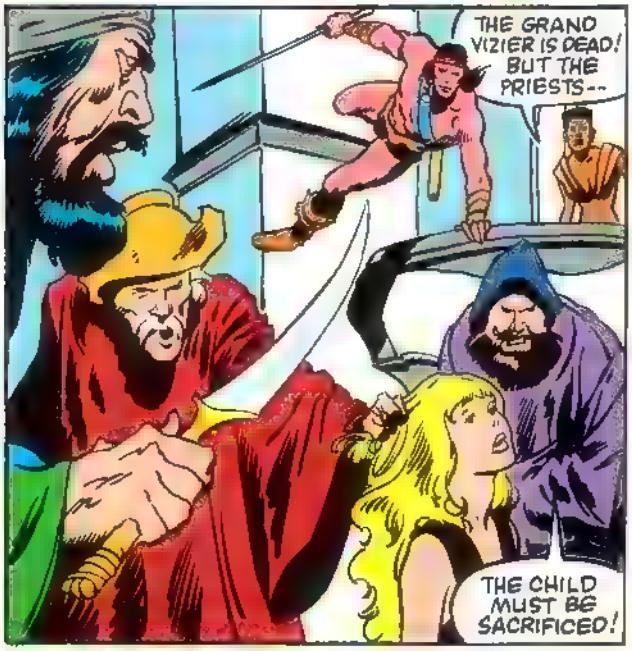

HA! I'VE GOT YOU WHERE I WANT YOU, HAVEN'T I, DOG!

I'VE GOT YOU RIGHT--

--WH--

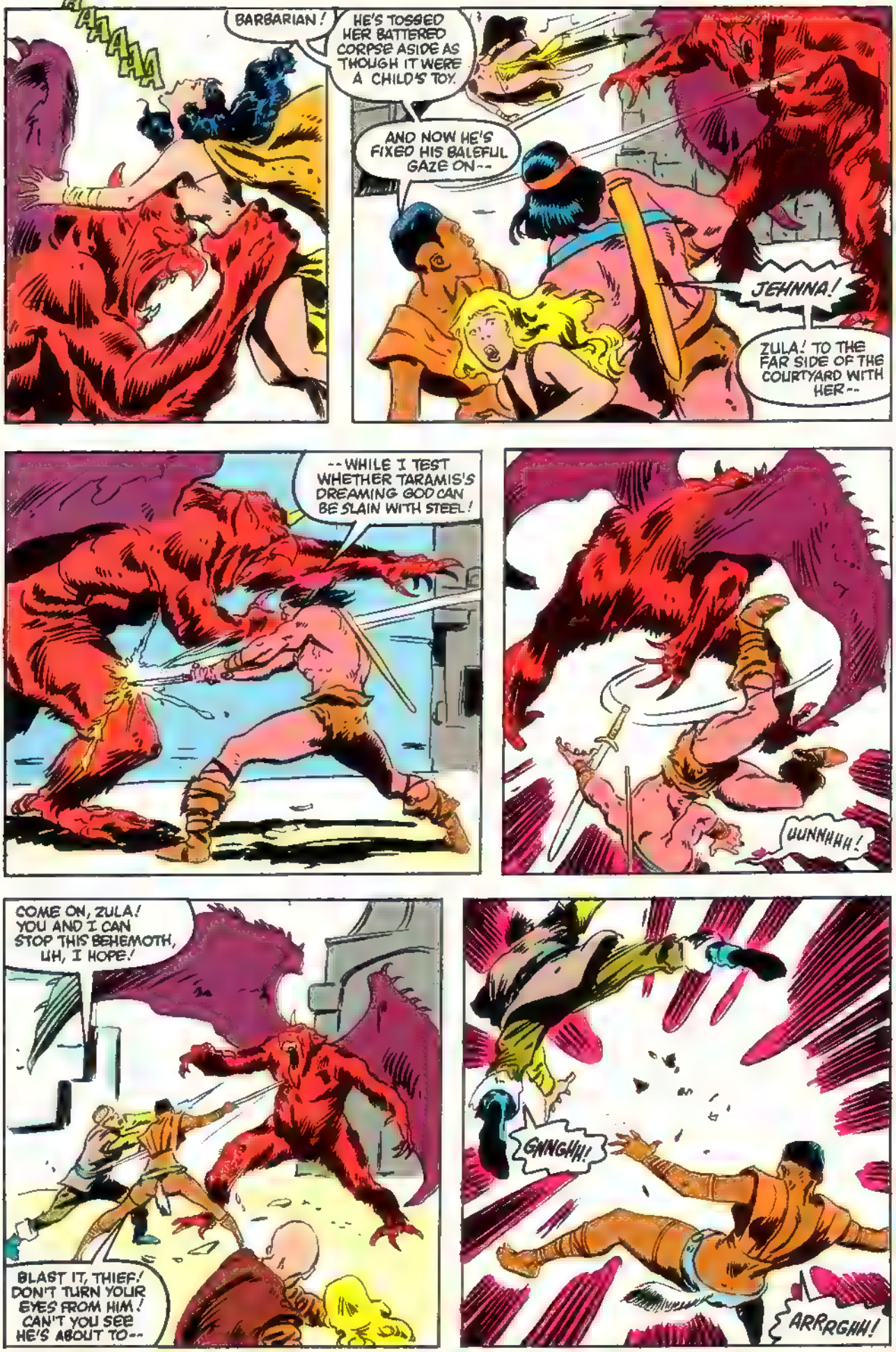
UUUUUU!

BARBARIAN! QUICKLY!
ZULA!

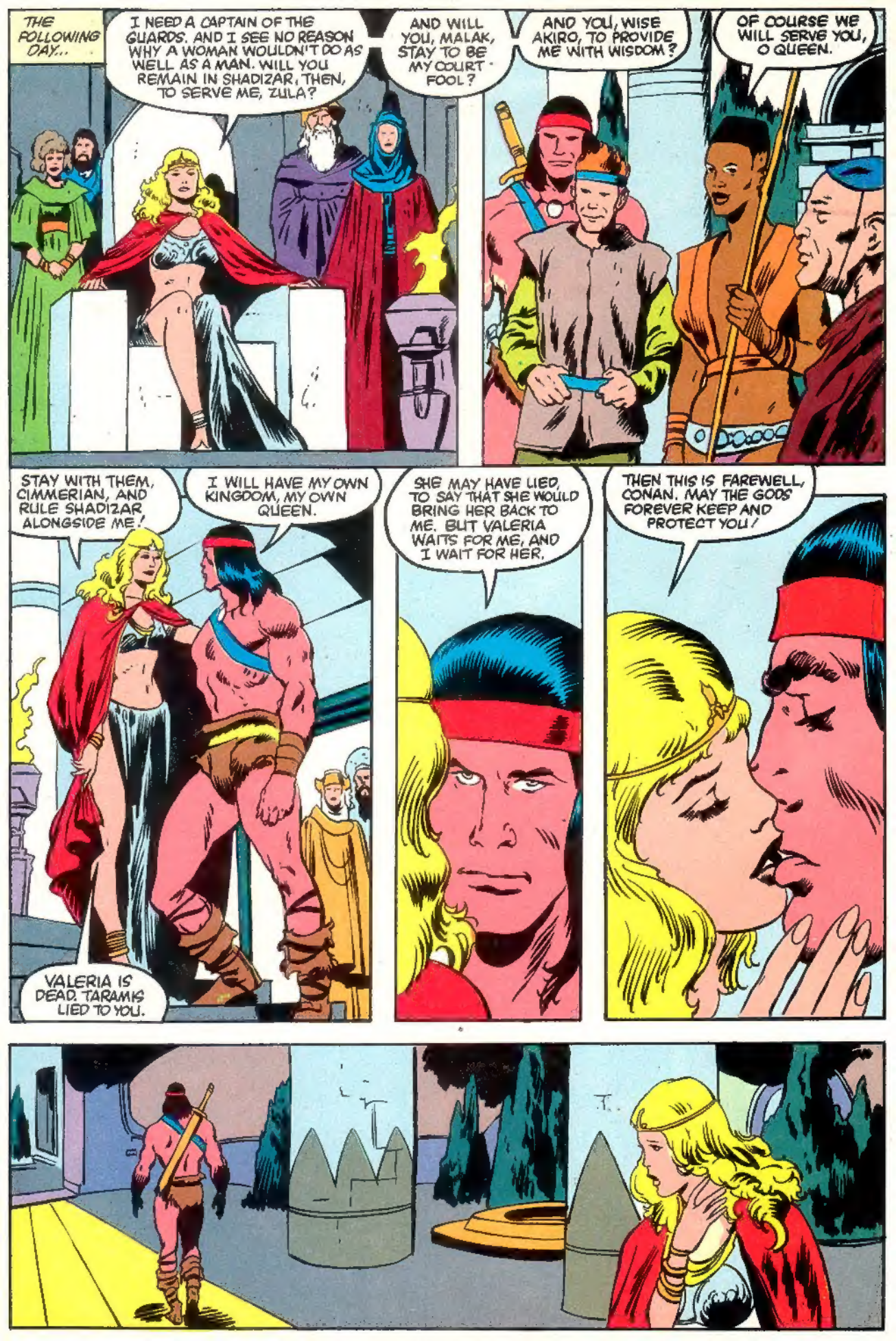

THE GRAND VIZIER IS DEAD! BUT THE PRIESTS--
THE CHILD MUST BE SACRIFICED!

OTHERWISE, A DI--
UNNGHH!
:GASP!:
HE FIGHTS LIKE A WILD MAN! FLEE!

CIMMERIAN! BEHOLD HOW THE SKY HAS ABRUPTLY DARKENED! AND THE DREAMING GOD! HE'S BEGUN TO--
--CHANGE--!!
CROM'S FIENDS!
THE HOUR OF OUR DOOM IS UPON US!
RUN!
MY BELOVED! WAIT! IT IS I-- TARAMIS, QUEEN OF SHADIZAR!
SHE WHO HAS GIVEN YOU--
OOOOHHH!


AAAAAHH
BARBARIAN!
HE'S TOSSED HER BATTERED CORPSE ASIDE AS THOUGH IT WERE A CHILD'S TOY.
AND NOW HE'S FIXED HIS BALEFUL GAZE ON--
JEHNNA!
ZULA! TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE COURTYARD WITH HER--
--WHILE I TEST WHETHER TARAMIS'S DREAMING GOD CAN BE SLAIN WITH STEEL!
UUNNHHH!
COME ON, ZULA! YOU AND I CAN STOP THIS BEHEMOTH, UH, I HOPE!
BLAST IT, THIEF! DON'T TURN YOUR EYES FROM HIM! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S ABOUT TO--
GNNGHH!
ARRRGHH!

AKIRO...?
STAY BEHIND ME, CHILD!
CIMMERIAN! HEAR ME! EVEN YOUR BLADE IS USELESS AGAINST DAGOTH!
HIS HORN IS HIS LIFE!
TEAR OUT THE HORN!
GRRRARRHH
BLAST IT, WIZARD! I'M--
PRAISE CROM!
THAT HIDEOUS GORE GUSHING OUT OF ITS--
IT'S THE HORROR'S LIFE'S BLOOD, GIRL! HE'S FINISHED!


THE FOLLOWING DAY...
I NEED A CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS. AND I SEE NO REASON WHY A WOMAN WOULDN'T DO AS WELL AS A MAN. WILL YOU REMAIN IN SHADIZAR, THEN, TO SERVE ME, ZULA?
AND WILL YOU, MALAK, STAY TO BE MY COURT FOOL?
AND YOU, WISE AKIRO, TO PROVIDE ME WITH WISDOM?
OF COURSE WE WILL SERVE YOU, O QUEEN.
STAY WITH THEM, CIMMERIAN, AND RULE SHADIZAR ALONGSIDE ME!
I WILL HAVE MY OWN KINGDOM, MY OWN QUEEN.
VALERIA IS DEAD. TARAMIS LIED TO YOU.
SHE MAY HAVE LIED, TO SAY THAT SHE WOULD BRING HER BACK TO ME. BUT VALERIA WAITS FOR ME, AND I WAIT FOR HER.
THEN THIS IS FAREWELL, CONAN. MAY THE GODS FOREVER KEEP AND PROTECT YOU!

CONAN
THE
KING
BI-MONTHLY FROM MARVEL!

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN™
THE BARBARIAN

ON SALE EVERY MONTH

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